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HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
BOSTON AND NEW YORK

THE LIFE OF
EDGAR ALLAN POE

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

Edgar A Poe

THE LIF[illegible] OF
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WITH MEN O[illegible]

BY

[illegible]GE E. WOODBER[illegible]

VOLUME I

[illegible]ON AND NEW YORK
[illegible]ON MIFFLIN COMPANY
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1909

Edgar A Poe

THE LIFE OF
EDGAR ALLAN POE

PERSONAL AND LITERARY

WITH HIS CHIEF CORRESPONDENCE
WITH MEN OF LETTERS

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GEORGE E. WOODBERRY

VOLUME I

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1909

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Published March 1909

PREFACE

I WAS asked, somewhat to my surprise, by my friend, the late Charles Dudley Warner, in 1883, to write the life of Poe for the American Men of Letters Series, which he was then editing. My attention had never been drawn to Poe, nor my interest specially excited by his works; so that I entered upon the task, my first important literary commission, with a fresh mind; and, though contact with the subject may have bred prejudice, I had none at the outset, so far as I remember. Out of this biography my later labors naturally grew. The late W. M. Griswold, with whom I had a slight acquaintance in college, on receiving by the death of his father's literary executor the Poe papers originally given to the elder Griswold, asked me, in conjunction with the editors of "The Century Magazine" and "Scribner's Magazine," to edit these papers, and I did so. I also used them in the memoir prefixed to the edition of Poe's works undertaken by me in collaboration with the late E. C. Stedman and at his request. At a later period I edited, similarly,

the Poe-Chivers papers for "The Century Magazine." Through these years information naturally came to me, also, from other sources, though I have never engaged in personal investigation since writing the former biography. That work has become antiquated by its omissions; and it seems to me proper now to gather up my earlier and later labors in a more full and precise biography.

I have aimed to make this, in the main, a literary biography; as such it has two special interests, in that it is a life led outside of New England, and that it embodies much contemporaneous literary history not involved in any other life of our greater writers. I have aimed also to present in the text the facts of Poe's career as they lie in my own mind; in the Notes I have allowed others to speak freely, for praise or dispraise, in order that all may have a fair field where there is so great controversy. In the former biography I excluded much, and suppressed much, of what I thought the world would willingly let die; but this proved a fruitless attempt to assist oblivion, and I have, in the present work, at least noticed all that has been said or alleged on the subject.

I am indebted to my predecessors; and I

desire to say that I am unable to fall in with that judgment which divides them into the goats and the sheep — the "malignant" and the "amiable"; they all, divergent as they are, seem to me to have written, according to their knowledge and their conscience, sincerely. I have derived valuable matter from all. I have received also what seems to me now incredible kindness, not only from those who have principally assisted me at all times, but from scores of others, both acquaintances and strangers; so that this biography seems the work really of many hands rather than of my own, and my part mainly that of investigation and arrangement. There will be other lives of Poe. I am content, if no other claim may be made, to have here edited with care the materials for his life; and, whatever shall be the fortune of this work, I am amply rewarded by the conviction that I have, at least, made easier the way for that ideal biographer who, when he comes, shall be perfect in good-sense, good-will, and discretion.

G. E. W.

BEVERLY, MASS., February 1, 1909.

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THE LIFE OF
EDGAR ALLAN POE

CHAPTER I

PARENTAGE

EDGAR ALLAN POE was born at Boston, January 19, 1809. His parents were regular members of the company then playing at the Federal Street Theatre. His father, who was about thirty years of age, had been known in his youth at Baltimore as the son of the ardent Revolutionary patriot, David Poe, whose name he bore, and as, ostensibly, a student of law. His friends, however, thought of him rather as a clever amateur actor and a boon companion of the Thespian Club; and after he had emigrated to Georgia, where one of his father's brothers had settled, they may have found nothing out of keeping with his affable, impulsive, and unreflecting character in the report that he had left the brown law books ranged on the shelves of his uncle's brother-in-law and gone upon the stage. Old General Poe,

as the citizens called him in recognition of his Revolutionary services, was not a man to condone such an offense in his eldest born. He was in his sixtieth year, with at least three younger children to provide for, and he let the runaway shift for himself, — a situation tediously familiar, in after years, to the young actor, who was most successful on the boards in that part of the "Wild Gallant" which he had first essayed in real life; but his father was by no means the worldly-minded, dry-hearted miser of the playwrights.

General Poe, indeed, left a memory full of virtue. Every action of his life bespeaks a strong and decisive man, from the time he first comes into public notice as "one David Poe, a wheelwright," leader of the mob that ousted Robert Christie, the Royal Sheriff, from the city, and afterward attacked the Tory editor, William Goddard, the slanderer of Washington. He had a natural right to a rude and resolute strength, since by a not improbable tradition he traced his descent through his father, John Poe, who had emigrated about 1745 from the north of Ireland and settled in Pennsylvania, to one of Cromwell's officers who had received grants of Irish land, while on his mother's side he is said to have been

nephew to John MacBride, who fought under Nelson at Copenhagen, and rose to be an Admiral of the Blue. In his Revolutionary post of Assistant Quartermaster-General for Baltimore, he was a prompt and effective official, whose patriotism was genuine and deep-seated, since he advanced money from his scanty private funds, for which, be it added, no repayment was made, except long afterwards in the form of a pension to his widow. His country's injustice, however, did not lessen his devotion. In 1814, when he was in his seventy-second year, the old spirit blazed out again in his active service as a volunteer in the battle of North Point, against his old enemies, the British. An honest, vigorous, sensible man, capable of worldly sacrifice, — so much he was; and if the ties of natural affection seem to have been in his heart neither strong nor tender, even toward his orphaned grandchildren, it must be remembered that he was not prosperous, and they were well cared for by their adoptive parents. The last record concerning him is that Lafayette, on his parting visit to this country, went to his grave and kissed the sod above him, exclaiming, "Ici repose un cœur noble!"

On the maternal side, the record of Edgar

Poe's lineage belongs to the fleeting memories of the stage, and is both briefer and more obscure. The few facts that remain in regard to his mother and grandmother have been practically ignored by our books of theatrical annals, and are to be found only in contemporary newspapers. The "Independent Chronicle and the Universal Advertiser," published at Boston, in its issue of February 11, 1796, announced that Mrs. Arnold, an English actress from the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, would make her first appearance in America at the Federal Street Theatre, on February 12. If the success of her first night was an earnest of her future fortune, she must have received a considerable share of applause, as is seen by the following characteristic notice: —

"We have had the pleasure of a complete fruition in the anticipation of the satisfaction a Boston audience would receive from the dramatic abilities of Mrs. Arnold. The theatre never shook, with such bursts of applause, as on her first appearance, on Friday evening last. Not a heart but was sensible of her merits; not a tongue but vibrated in her praise; not a hand but moved in approbation. Nor did these expressions of satisfaction die with the evening;

her merits have since been the pleasing theme of every conversation."[1]

Mrs. Arnold, whose forte seems to have been in vocal music, sang often, and also acted in comic operas, burlettas, and romantic plays, until the close of the season, May 16. On June 1, she gave a vocal concert, at which her daughter, Elizabeth, made her first appearance and sang some popular songs adapted to her youth. The fascination of the mother was not confined to the stage. She had now captivated — "Nobody Coming to Marry Me" was one of her piquant ditties — the impressionable heart of one Mr. Tubbs, a player on the pianoforte; and after their speedy union the bridegroom set up a theatre at Portland, Maine. A very little theatre it must have been, hardly more than a family affair, since it was recruited from the amateurs of the town, and had for its chief attractions only Tubbs's piano, his wife's voice, and the precocity of his step-daughter, — "the beautiful Miss Arnold whose powers as an actress command admiration."[2] One winter's experience of the theatrical enthusiasm of Maine proved enough,

[1] *Massachusetts Mercury*, February 16, 1796.

[2] *The Eastern Herald and Gazette of Maine*, December 12, 1796.

and when spring came the three were engaged as members of the troupe made up by Manager Solee from the Boston and Charleston comedians to play in the latter city. On their way South they stopped at New York, where two performances were given at the John Street Theatre in August, but the company was soon afterwards scattered by the fatal yellow fever of that year. During the autumn the family went South, and on the opening of the Charleston theatre, in November, made their début. They performed the whole winter, but Miss Arnold in only slight parts, — a child, a nymph, a Cupid; and at the close of the season, in April, grandmother Tubbs and her obscure consort, the pianoforte player, disappeared from theatrical history, while young Miss Arnold returned to the North and joined the Philadelphia company. With her new associates she acted the next four seasons (1798–1802), during their winter engagements in the city, their summer ventures at Southwark, and on their excursions to Washington and elsewhere; her rôles were usually unimportant, but she enjoyed benefits and was apparently under the protection of Mr. Usher and Mrs. Snowden. On March 14, 1800, Mr. C. D. Hopkins, a young man, made a reputation

on his very first appearance as "Tony Lumpkin," and became a popular member of the company, with which he continued to play, except during occasional absences at the South. In 1802, after the season had closed with the engagement of Mr. Green, of the Virginia company, Miss Arnold played at Baltimore, and there received a benefit, June 4. Possibly it was on this occasion that the charms of the petite and arch beauty inflamed the heart of young Poe; but if it were so the spark must quickly have grown dim and cold, for within two months she was married to Mr. Hopkins, who had been acting during the spring at Norfolk. Early in August the pair were delighting the people of Alexandria, and they were long to hold good rank among the Virginia players, as may still be read in old files of Petersburg, Norfolk, and Richmond papers.

In the fall of 1804 a new member was added to the company in the person of Mr. David Poe. This youth of twenty-five summers[1] had left his

[1] The age of both David Poe and Miss Arnold has been reckoned (Ingram, i, 3) as if they were born in 1787. The youthfulness of the lovers, however, disappears with the other romantic features of their mythical elopement. The mention of Miss Arnold at Boston and Portland in 1796 can hardly be thought to apply to a child of nine years, and her rôles the

uncle's at Augusta, and made "his second appearance on any stage" at Charleston, December 5, 1803; but he had previously performed at the same place, December 1, without any special announcement. He had continued uninterruptedly in the same company until the close of the season in the spring, a diffident, easily abashed actor, although in his own rôle as Harry Thunder in "Wild Oats." He was not, as has hitherto been asserted, drawn to the South and tempted before the footlights by any inamorata except the Comic Muse; nor is it likely that his uncle, who died the following September, withdrew him, as the tradition avers, from the fascination of the theatre after he had entered on his career. In November, at all events, the new actor, for whom particular favor was asked as being American-born, was playing in the Virginia company at Petersburg, and with it he continued as it moved from place to place

next summer in New York (the play-bill ascribes one of these, Agnes, in "The Mountaineers," to "Mrs. Arnold," but presumably by a misprint, as the name of "Mrs. Tubbs" is in the same list) could not have been filled by a person so young. The character of her life, and the notices of her acting make it exceedingly improbable that she was much, if at all, younger than her husband. He was born "certainly not later than 1780." — John P. Poe, Esq., to the author, June 19, 1883.

through its wide circuit, until, early in September, 1805, it opened the season at Mr. Green's new theatre in Washington. Mr. Green was particularly unfortunate in this venture, and not the least of his losses was that of the popular comedian, as he is styled, Mr. Hopkins, who died, after a brief illness, on October 26. The company, and his widow among the rest, performed until Christmas, and then went southward again. Within a month, Mr. Poe, with some pecuniary aid from a friend (for these actors were always poor), married Mrs. Hopkins, and early in February they were already playing at Richmond. They remained in Virginia until May, when they started North; and after acting at Philadelphia in June and July, and at the new Vauxhall Gardens, New York, from the middle of July until late in August, they arrived at Boston by October, and were welcomed by Mrs. Poe's old friends, the Ushers.

Here they had their permanent home for the three following years. From the contemporary criticisms[1] it is easy to form a clear and com-

[1] These are contained in the various journals of all the cities in which the Poes acted, and more particularly in a few periodicals of elegant literature, — *The Polyanthos*, *The Emerald*, *The Theatrical Censor and Critical Miscellany*, *The Rambler's Magazine and Theatrical Register*, and *The New Englander*.

plete idea of the personal appearance and histrionic talent of the poet's father and mother. David Poe was a man of prepossessing figure, suitable for the juvenile and gallant parts, the Henrys and Charles Sedleys, which he habitually took; his voice was full and manly, but untrained, deficient in modulation and in power, his utterance distinct but mechanical, his gesture either too stiff or too flaccid. He was sometimes praised, but more often censured, or even made fun of, for his lack of dignity and his dependence on the prompter. His range was narrow, his manner always remained amateurish, and after repeated trials he sank at last, it is said, into insignificance. But his wife, who had been born and trained to the stage, rose above mediocrity, although she apparently never equaled her mother in popularity or in merit. She was fragile in figure (Ariel was one of her rôles), and her voice, when she sang, lacked richness and volume. She began her Boston engagement with light impersonations, and soon won upon the public by her archness and roguery in the comic and her sweetness in the romantic plays. Mr. Buckingham, the somewhat exacting critic of "The Polyanthos," pronounced the hoyden to be her forte, but others were more

FEDERAL STREET THEATRE, BOSTON

indulgent to her serious representations. In the course of time she became the leading female performer; when Cooper and Fennell were enjoying their greatest triumphs, she was the Cordelia, Ophelia, or Blanche of the drama, and when the youthful prodigy, John Howard Payne, first came on the Boston boards in 1809, she still maintained her position, playing Palmyra to his Zaphna, Sigismunda to his Tancred, and the like parts. An impression of the regard in which she was held, and of her own theatrical labors, can, perhaps, best be got from the following favorable notice, which, moreover, throws a suggestive light on the worldly condition of the lesser players of that time: —

"If industry can claim from the public either favor or support, the talents of Mrs. Poe will not pass unrewarded. — She has supported and maintained a course of characters more numerous and arduous than can be paralleled on our boards during any one season. Often she has been obliged to perform three characters on the same evening, and she has always been perfect in the text, and has well comprehended the intention of her author.

"In addition to her industry, however, Mrs. Poe has claims for other favors from the respect-

ability of her talents. Her Romps and Sentimental characters have an individuality which has marked them peculiarly her own. But she has succeeded often in the tender personations of tragedy; her conceptions are always marked with good sense and natural ability. We are confident to hope therefore that the Bostonians will not suffer her merits to be so slighted that poverty and distress are to result from her benefit night, as has been the case with other performers."[1]

This appeal was ineffective, since the Poes advertised a second benefit, in conjunction with the Ushers, to indemnify them, as they state in their personal card to the public (in which they "hope for that sanction, influence, and liberal support which has ever yet distinguished a Boston audience"), for what they term "the great failure and severe losses sustained by their former attempts."[2] A friendly effort was made by one "Senex" to increase Mrs. Poe's reputation by praise of her moral qualities and domestic virtues, and she was supported by the good-will of some ladies in society; but there was clearly a party against her among the

[1] *Boston Gazette*, March 21, 1808.
[2] *Ibid.* April 18, 1808.

critics, to which she must finally have succumbed, even if she had been more successfully defended by the characteristic arguments to which, as Mr. Buckingham relates, her husband resorted by calling upon that gentleman with the purpose of caning him for his impertinence. From such incidents and from the general tone of criticism the natural conclusion is that Mrs. Poe was an interesting rather than a brilliant actress, more deserving than fortunate, and indebted for her moderate share of favor rather to her painstaking care than to native talents.

She played very often during these years; frequently she sang, and sometimes she danced a Polish minuet, — the feminine counterpart to her husband's hornpipes, reels, and strathspeys. There are but two marked breaks in her appearances: one in the early months of 1807, when her son William may have been born; the other in the same months of 1809, when she suffered her second confinement. The child, born January 19, was named Edgar. The mother went again upon the stage February 10, and played until the end of the season almost incessantly. The family then left Boston, never to return, but not without grateful feelings toward the city, at least

on Mrs. Poe's part, since on the back of a painting from her own hand she charged her son to "love Boston, the place of his birth, and where his mother found her best and most sympathetic friends."[1]

Early in September the Poes had become members of the New York company, in which they remained until the following July, still engaged in acting the romantic and sentimental drama and light comedy of the period. They made little impression. At the close of the season they left New York, and within six weeks Mrs. Poe had joined her old friends of Mr. Green's Virginia company, and was announced at Richmond, but no further mention of her husband has been found. Mrs. Poe continued to play in the field of her early triumphs, and from the warm commendation she received it would seem that her charms and beauty had suffered no loss of power over the audiences of the Southern circuit. At an uncertain date in 1810 she gave birth to her third child, Rosalie. In the summer of 1811 she was playing, according to Richmond tradition, at Norfolk, and had with her the two younger children and her mother; her husband is said to have been living

[1] Ingram, i, 6.

in a lingering consumption, and on the departure of the company to have been left at Norfolk and to have died there. At the opening of the Richmond season, in August, 1811, Mrs. Poe was still an active member of the troupe, nor did she cease to appear until after her benefit night, early in October. She had fallen into a rapid decline, and the family, which was in the utmost destitution, immediately became the object of the charity of the Richmond ladies. The players, too, advertised a second night for her benefit, "in consequence of the serious and long-continued indisposition of Mrs. Poe, and in compliance with the advice and solicitation of many of the most respectable families,"[1] and on the morning of that day the following card appeared: —

☞ TO THE HUMANE

"On this night Mrs. Poe, lingering on the bed of disease and surrounded by her children, asks your assistance; and *asks it perhaps for the last time.*"[2]

A few days later, December 8, she died. A

[1] *The Virginia Patriot*, November 29, 1811.
[2] *The Enquirer*, November 29, 1811.

few kind words in a Richmond paper, a single line in one at Boston, was all that marked the close of a career which, though honorable, must have been full of labor, anxiety, and poverty. The tinsel crown, the gauze, the flash of the paste jewels, the robes and the red shoes, went into the chest of faded things. Harlequin must seek a new Columbine before the footlights should flare up again; and there, left over from the comedy, were three children, the eldest five years old, all helpless and in want. Possibly the actors might have afforded them some protection, but the disastrous conflagration of the theatre on Christmas night prevented. That fatal calamity, which threw the city into mourning and turned the playhouse into a church, deeply stirred the community, and in the charity immediately extended to all the sufferers these orphans were not neglected. Mrs. Allan, a young wife of twenty-five years, and her friend, Mrs. MacKenzie, who were attracted by the younger children, took, one Edgar, the other Rosalie, into their homes and gave them severally the family names of Allan and MacKenzie in baptism by the hands of Dr. Buchanan, at the house of Mr. John Richard. William, the eldest, was cared for by his father's friends at Baltimore,

by whom he appears to have been taken at an earlier date, not improbably soon after Edgar's birth, when, tradition asserts, the family visited the grandparents at Baltimore in the fall of 1809.

CHAPTER II

THE SCHOOLBOY

Mr. John Allan had emigrated from Ayrshire, Scotland, and had been brought up, together with his future partner, Charles Ellis, in the store of his uncle, William Galt, a leading merchant in Richmond. The two clerks founded a new firm, Ellis & Allan, which had already gained position, and commanded some capital in the Virginia tobacco trade. Mr. Allan was now thirty-one years old and had been married for some time; he resided over his own store on Fourteenth Street, near Tobacco Alley. He was childless; and although in admitting the orphan of the poor actors to his family he had at first merely yielded to his wife's urgent entreaties, the black-eyed, curly-haired boy naturally soon became a pet in the empty home, especially as his precocity and beauty blended with the charm of his young affection to minister to the pride as well as touch the heart of the foster-father. At the age of six he could read, draw, and dance; of more showy accomplishments (a chair, or else

the long, narrow Virginia table, cleared for dessert, being his stage), his trick before company was to pledge their healths in sweetened wine and water with roguish grace, and his talent was to declaim, for each of which he had, perhaps by inheritance, an equal aptitude. He is recalled standing between the doors of the drawing-room and reciting from the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" to a large company, in a sweet voice and with clear enunciation. He wore dark curls and had brilliant eyes, and those who remembered him spoke of the pretty figure he made, with his vivacious ways. He received the rudiments of knowledge in a private school at Richmond. His childhood, both at school and at home, was happy, and his only trials arose from the tempering of maternal indulgence by the sterner disciplinary nature of Mr. Allan's control. His environment was not one of wealth, but of simple and modest living.

About June 17, 1815,[1] the close of the war with England offering an opening for trade, Mr. Allan sailed for England, with his wife, her sis-

[1] Colonel Thomas H. Ellis, to the author, May 28, 1884. These statements regarding Mr. Allan's absence are based on the books of the firm, Ellis & Allan, in Colonel Ellis's possession.

ter, and Edgar, to establish a branch office: he apparently contemplated a long stay, since he disposed of some of his household goods and effects by auction sale before leaving. He provided an "Olive Branch," a "Murray's Reader," and two "Murray's Spelling-Books" for Edgar's entertainment during the voyage, and shortly after his arrival placed the child, then six years old, at the Manor-House School, Stoke Newington, a suburb of London.

His residence there seems to have left deep marks of remembrance upon his mind, nor is it unlikely that the delight in the ancient, which afterwards characterized him, sprang partly from this early familiarity with a memorable past not yet vanished from the eye and hand. The main village, which has since been lost in the overflow of the metropolis, then consisted of a long elm-embowered street of the Tudor time, following the track of a Roman road: near the old Green, by deeply-shaded walks that still bear the names of Henry and Elizabeth, stood the houses of Anne Boleyn's ill-fated lover, Earl Percy, and of her daughter's fortunate courtier, the favorite Leicester: to the west ran the green lanes, over hazy inland fields, and to the east the more modern street of Queen Anne and early

Georgian architecture, where behind its formal box-bordered parterre rose the white Manor-House School, old and irregular, sloping in the rear to the high brick wall, with its ponderous spiked and iron-studded gates, which enclosed the playground. In the seclusion of these grounds Poe spent his school-days from his seventh to his twelfth year; there in the long, narrow, low school-room, oak-ceiled, gothic-windowed, with its irregular, black, jackknife-hewed desks and the sacred corner-boxes for master and ushers (in one of them once sat the murderer, Eugene Aram), he conned his Latin and mispronounced his French; in the bedroom beyond the many tortuous passages and perplexing little stairways, he first felt the wakening of the conscience, whose self-echoing whispers he afterwards heightened into the voice and ghostly terror of the Spanish *Hombre Embozado;* in that wide, graveled, treeless, and benchless playground he trained his muscles in the sports, and when on Saturday afternoon the mighty gate swung open, he and his mates filed out to walk beneath the gigantic and gnarled trees, amid which once lived Shakespeare's friend, Essex, or to gaze with a boy's eyes of wonder at the thick walls, deep windows and doors, massive with locks

and bars, behind which "Robinson Crusoe" was written; and on Sunday, after the holiday ramble, he would obey the summons of the hollow-toned church bell, sounding from its fretted tower, and witness from the scholars' remote gallery pew that miraculous weekly transformation in the pulpit, — "This reverend man, with countenance so demurely benign, with robes so glossy and so clerically flowing, with wig so minutely powdered, so rigid and so vast, — could this be he who, of late, with sour visage and in snuffy habiliments, administered, ferule in hand, the Draconian Laws of the academy? Oh, gigantic paradox!"[1]

It seems a monotonous existence; but touched by the spirit and the flush of boyhood, it was really a full one, the life of keen sensation, of personal rivalries and party strife, the first battle and the first prize. "*Oh, le bon temps*," Poe cries, "*que ce siècle de fer!*" and, indeed, he must have passed many a lonely hour, too, under that meagre and rigid régime of inferior English school-mastery; and though he learned to run and leap, construe Latin and speak French, and during some portion of the time regularly visited the Allans in London, yet, remembering that

[1] *Works*, ii, 8.

these five years are the ones in which home ties are drawn closest about the hearts of most American boys, and the lessons of concession learned by them, a too curious mind might discover in this stretch of the boy's life the first workings of the sinister influence which afterwards so harshly separated him from the house of his foster-father. Dr. Bransby, however, the parson-teacher, remarked nothing in Edgar Allan, as he was called, except that he was clever, but spoilt by "an extravagant amount of pocket money."[1] The village, indeed, was said by Beaumont and Fletcher to be a place "where ale and cakes are plenty"; but the boy's wildest excesses were probably in the same raspberry tarts and ginger beer on which at the Grey Friars a year or two later Clive Newcome dissipated his pocketful of sovereigns. Poe, no doubt, took the fun, the homesickness, and the good things as other boys did; and when, in the June of 1820, he left behind him the old trees and ruinous houses, the mist and fragrance and mould of the drowsy English parish, and returned to Richmond, he was not much different from his mates, except that he made his first trials at verse and kept the manuscripts.

[1] *The Athenæum*, No. 2660, p. 497, October 19, 1878.

He arrived home with the Allans at New York, July 21, after a passage of thirty-six days, and reached Richmond, August 2. The family settled, their own house being leased, at the home of Mr. Ellis, on the southwest corner of Franklin and Second streets, and resided there for the greater part of a year; they then removed to a long, low frame house with dormer windows, fronting west on Fifth Street, beyond St. James Church; this was Poe's unpretentious boyhood home. He at once renewed his studies in the English and Classical School of Joseph H. Clarke, who is described as a fiery, pedantic, pompous Irishman from Trinity College, Dublin. There he read the ordinary classical authors of the old preparatory curriculum, continued his French, and capped Latin verses, a pastime of which he is reported to have been fond. He was lacking in diligence and accuracy, but was quick and brilliant; and when it came the turn of his set to be at the top of the school, he had but one rival in scholarship. He had already shown his poetic instinct; his master recalled a manuscript volume of verses, addressed to the little girls of Richmond, which Mr. Allan showed him with a view to publication; and the gallant versifier, known too among his mates

for satirical effusions, was also the poet of the school,— no slight distinction in the eyes of the fellows who listened to the English ode in which, on the retirement of Master Clarke to give place to Master William Burk, in the fall of 1823, he addressed the outgoing principal. He was, besides, contrary to Mr. Allan's wishes, who may well have had forebodings at seeing the actor-blood give sign, a member of the Thespian Society, which gave performances to audiences of forty or fifty persons, in a tent on a vacant lot, for the fee of one cent. In athletic exercises, the other half of youthful life, he was especially active, being aided in this, perhaps, by the training of the Manor-House playground; slight in figure at first, but robust and tough, he was a swift runner and far leaper, and he possessed, together with some skill in boxing, the English schoolboy's readiness to use it. He began, too, his military career, while still a schoolboy, being lieutenant[1] of the Richmond Junior Volunteers, otherwise known as the Junior Morgan Riflemen, which acted as a body-guard to Lafayette on his visit to the city in October, 1824.

[1] *Calendar of Virginia State Papers*, x, 518 (1892). Other communications from this youthful organization to the Governor and Council are in the Executive Archives.

Poe evidently cut a considerable figure in the school; he was its champion in the simple tournaments of those days and prominent in its debating society; in short, he shared in every school activity; but he was best remembered as a fine, bold swimmer; and as, since Byron, poets seem to have a prescriptive right to the mention of their aquatic feats, be it once more recorded that, when fifteen years old, Poe swam in the James River from Ludlam's wharf to Warwick Bar, six miles, against a very strong tide and in a hot June sun, and afterwards walked back to the city with little apparent fatigue.

But neither his facile scholarship, nor his aptness in quoting Latin hexameters and stringing English rhymes, nor his fame in the sports, made him the favorite of the school. His aristocratic mates, it is said by one of themselves, remembered that he was sprung from the poor actors, and were averse to his leadership. Poe, too, partly it may be because he was aware of the reason for this slight but cutting ostracism, helped it by a defiant and irritable spirit that sometimes broke through the restraint of his well-bred manners. One who was counted nearer to him than the rest describes him as

RICHMOND ABOUT 1830

"self-willed, capricious, inclined to be imperious, and though of generous impulses not steadily kind, or even amiable."[1] He had his chums in his own and his fags in the younger set, and their recollections show the comradeship of youth; he read them his poems just as he quoted Horace, in search of a certain sort of recognition; he was sensible of affection, too, and capable of warm attachment, as in his friendship for young Sully, the artist's nephew, who was a refined but difficult boy; amid all such associations, however, he lived most to himself.

Mr. Allan's ventures in extending his trade had not prospered; he made a personal assignment in 1822, but by an arrangement with his creditors he held possession of the property. He was relieved from this situation by the death, March 26, 1823, of his uncle, William Galt, one of the richest men of the state; the share he received under the will was the substance of what was afterwards known as the Allan fortune, but before receiving it, if one may judge by the record of mortgages, the family had been obliged to live with much prudence. Mr. Allan removed in this year to a house at the northwest corner of Fourteenth Street and Tobacco Alley, which

[1] Ingram, i, 24.

was a part of his inheritance. Poe was, therefore, not reared in great wealth; but in a family of limited means and plain manners. The Allans, nevertheless, belonged to the most cultivated and agreeable society that Virginia knew in the days of her old-fashioned and justly famed courtesy and hospitality, and a boyhood spent in association with such gentlemen as Edgar constantly and familiarly met could not fail to be both pleasant and of the highest utility in forming both manner and character. A boy, however, is little sensible of the value of such surroundings, and in the unfolding of his heart Poe must, amid all, have missed in Mr. Allan what to a child of genius was of far more consequence, — responsive sympathy, and the secret understanding that springs from parental love. In his home life he was indulged by the ladies of the family and the servants, as a pet in the house, and he grew up with a certain aloofness from Mr. Allan, a sense of hardness and narrowness in his patron; but this is not an unusual family situation. He was always a favorite with women, and besides the Allans he had also the Mackenzies, at whose house he found a second and almost equal home. His lot as a boy was a favored one; he was happy, hardy,

and healthful, and in his foster-mother, her sister known as "Aunt Fanny," the Mackenzies, and others, he found warm and ready affections. In a boy of his temperament and years there is no unlikelihood in that romantic memory of the day when in the home of a much younger schoolmate, his friend's mother, lovely, gentle, and gracious, spoke to him with some unusual tenderness, and the tones thrilled him with a new sensation, and kindled within him, in his own phrase, the first purely ideal love of his soul. He saw this lady, Jane Stith Stanard, but once. She died April 28, 1824, at the early age of thirty-one years; but the tale [1] that he haunted her grave by night, with all its later Poesque atmosphere, must be dismissed. His superstitious sense was early developed by darky tales, and it was in his shivering response to these that the germinal terror of his genius first stirred; but the psychology of a poet's boyhood can be but little known.

Poe left Master Burk's in March, 1825, and spent the remainder of the year in preparing himself, with the aid of private instruction, for the University of Virginia, then in its first

[1] *Edgar Poe and his Critics*, by Sarah Helen Whitman. New York: Rudd & Carleton, 1860: p. 49.

session. It would appear that his juvenile military service had already bred thoughts of enlistment in him, and his discontent with Mr. Allan's ways and plans, together with the restlessness of opening youth, generated other impulsive wishes; the result of it all for the present was that Mr. Allan allowed him to go to the University before entering on the commercial career that was naturally enough thought to be his proper destiny. In his not too scanty leisure hours of this summer he nursed his first flame, in the ordinary way of mortal love, by his devotions to a neighbor's daughter, younger than himself, Miss Sarah Elmira Royster. The inamorata's reminiscences of her lover are prettily conventional; he was, she says,[1] beautiful, sad, and silent, but as she adds that he was fond of music and clever at his sketching, particularly of herself, he evidently, like undistinguished youths, found humble means to overcome the difficulties of conversation; she acknowledges a private engagement with him. The most fondly recollected hours of this year, however (the last in which he lived under the same roof with Mr. Allan), must have been spent in the pleasant and spacious home which the latter purchased June 28,

[1] *Appletons' Journal*, N. S., iv, 429 (May, 1878).

1825, for $14,950, on the southeast corner of Main and Fifth streets, for his settled abode, and which he appears to have occupied late in the summer. Here Poe had his own room, prettily furnished with books and all a boy's belongings, where he liked to spend his time; it was, as it were, Mrs. Allan's gift to him, as his part in the new home. Here he entertained his brother, William, who visited him, and it may have been that each brother fired the other in those plans for wandering about the world that both were soon to realize. From the high southward windows during the fall and winter, Poe would look down on the green islands that stud the foaming rapids of the James, and see across the winding river the village of Manchester and the wooded fields beyond, bathed in the warm afternoon, or, stepping out between the shutters upon the adjoining wide-roofed balcony with its sanded floor, where stood the fine London telescope that, perhaps, gave to his inquisitive mind its bent toward astronomy, would look at the stars, or more idly would watch the moonlight falling on the myrtles and jessamines, the box and the fig-trees, the grapevines and raspberry bushes planted by the former Andalusian owner in the quiet garden close.

On February 14, 1826, Poe's name, with the place and date of his birth, was entered in the matriculation book of the University of Virginia, in the schools of ancient and modern languages. He was now seventeen years old, somewhat short in stature, thick-set, compact, bow-legged, with the rapid and jerky gait of an English boy; his face, clustered about by dark, curly hair, wore usually a grave and reserved expression; but his features would kindle with lively animation when, as frequently happened, he grew warm in his cause. He divided his time, after the custom of undergraduates, between the recitation-room, the punch-bowl, the card-table, athletic sports, and pedestrianism. He was a member of the classes in Latin and Greek, French, Spanish, and Italian, and attended them regularly; but his year at the University was characterized rather by the free enjoyment of youthful life than by studious zeal. He was one with his set. At first he had roomed with a chum, Miles George of Richmond, on the lawn, to adopt the local description, but after a quarrel and pugilistic duel in correct form between them (the combatants shook hands at the end of it) Poe settled in No. 13 West Range, decorated the walls with charcoal sketches out of Byron, and

there gathered the fellows to enjoy peach and honey, as the delectable old-time Southern punch was called, and to play at loo or seven-up. Both in drinking and in card-playing Poe acted capriciously, and either was or affected to be, as all his life, the creature of impulse.

"Poe's passion for strong drink," writes one of his intimate college mates, "was as marked and as peculiar as that for cards. It was not the *taste* of the beverage that influenced him; without a sip or smack of the mouth he would seize a full glass, without water or sugar, and send it home at a single gulp. This frequently used him up; but if not, he rarely returned to the charge."[1]

If the full glass was one of peach and honey, or merely of the peach brandy unmixed, Poe's susceptibility to such a draught, it should be remarked, by no means indicates a weak head, particularly in a youth of seventeen; but this fashion of drinking *en barbare* (as Baudelaire styles it) he kept up through life. As was to be expected from his excitable temperament, he

[1] Thomas Goode Tucker to Douglass Sherley, Esq., April 5, 1880. MS. Cf. *The Virginia University Magazine*, 1880. The official record of Poe is given (by Schuyler Poitevent) *ibid.*, December, 1897. Cf. "Edgar A. Poe and his College Companions," *New Orleans Times-Democrat*, May 18, 1884.

was ill adapted for gaming, or else luck ran strong against him, since he ended the year with heavy debts of honor. By his recklessness in card-playing he is said to have lost caste in the aristocratic clique. Whatever his private history may have been, he did not come under the notice of the Faculty, which is stated to have been at that time unusually watchful and strict; but as the administration of the University was somewhat peculiar, owing to the theories of its founder, Jefferson, an anecdote of the time will make the situation clearer.

It seems that the Faculty desired to check gambling, which had reached a great height, and as in Jefferson's judgment as much of the discipline as possible should be left to the civil authorities, arrangements were made to observe, indict, and try the principal offenders. One morning the county sheriff and his posse appeared at the doorway of a lecture-room where the students, already warned, were answering roll-call; a glance was enough for suspicion, and a shadow of suspicion for flight, as they made good their escape by windows and doors, and, eluding pursuit by striking into an unfrequented by-path for a wooded knoll on the skirts of the Ragged Mountains, safe among the hills they

enjoyed their favorite diversion unmolested, until at the end of a three days' vacation they were allowed to respond to the roll-call in peace.

Under such rules of government as this story implies, freedom from censure by the Faculty is not convincing proof of a blameless life; but there is no reason to suppose that Poe's habits, judged by the standard of morals that obtained where he was, gave occasion for much unfavorable remark, or were widely different from the habits of those members of his own set who became the pious judge and the acceptable Episcopalian clergyman. He fell into debt as did others whose extravagance at the tradesmen's shops and the hotels led to the enactment of a statute that declared all debts beyond the reasonable wants of a student null and void, but he felt his allowance to be inadequate, as was no doubt the case. He also thought he was badly used in his love-affair, and this may have led him to affect recklessness. Amid such natural dissipations of college life, he found leisure to cultivate his own genius, and would gather his friends about him to listen to some extravaganza of his invention, read in declamatory tones, or to some poem he had made during his long, solitary rambles in the Ragged Mountains. He had no confi-

dential friends. "No one knew him," is the unanimous testimony of his classmates; but they all described him consistently in terms that show he was a high-strung, romantic youth, who led a self-absorbed life, but was easily diverted into commonplace pleasures. While Poe was still at the University, however, Mr. Allan thought it best to inquire into the state of his affairs personally, and went up to Charlottesville.

He found there this youth of seventeen with a mind and resolution of his own, and with qualities and impulses so blended in him that his right guardianship might have taxed a far wiser hand and a more delicate and tender touch. He paid all of Poe's debts that he thought just; but, not being a man to take his boy's luck without wincing, he refused to honor losses at play, which amounted to about twenty-five hundred dollars.[1] At the close of the session, on Christmas Eve, 1826, Poe came home to his old room and pleasant holidays with a record for excellence in Latin and French; he was as welcome as ever in the house, at least to the ladies, and as much beloved. Mr. Allan at the beginning of

[1] *Edgar Allan Poe.* A letter by Colonel Thomas H. Ellis to the editor of the *Richmond Standard*, April 22, 1881.

the new year is said to have placed him in his own counting-room. The course of true love, too, had not run smooth. Mr. Royster, the father of the young lady with whom Poe had a private understanding, had diligently intercepted all his letters from the University; the romance consequently ended, on her part, in an early marriage, and, on Poe's, in some reproachful stanzas; but what part, if any, this youthful misadventure played in his affairs is only matter of conjecture. Poe soon broke away and put into effect his long-threatened plan of adventuring on a life of his own. He is said to have acted openly, bidding good-by to the family and taking some money from the ladies, and keeping them informed of his movements after he went out to seek his fortune in the world.

CHAPTER III

SOLDIER, POET, AND CADET

POE had for some time entertained more or less vaguely the plan of becoming a soldier; and soon after leaving Richmond he put this into execution, whether from choice or because he had no means of support. He enlisted at Boston, May 26, 1827, in the army of the United States as a private soldier, under the name of Edgar A. Perry.[1] He stated that he was born at Boston and was by occupation a clerk; and although minors were then accepted into the service, he gave his age as twenty-two years. He was really eighteen. He had, says the record, gray eyes, brown hair, and a fair complexion, and was five feet eight inches in height. He was at once assigned to Battery H, of the First Artillery, then serving in the harbor at Fort Independence. He made the acquaintance, perhaps before enlistment, of Calvin F. S. Thomas, a poor youth five months his senior, a New York boy, who had been bred at Norfolk, Virginia, whence he had

[1] War Department Records.

moved with his mother and sister to Boston, to obtain an education; it was possibly this Southern past that brought the two into connection. Thomas had just set up a printer's shop at 70 Washington Street, and Poe persuaded him to undertake the job of publishing his youthful verses. In due course he saw the first and unacknowledged heir of his invention in the shape of a small, thin book, mean in appearance and meagre in contents, entitled "Tamerlane and other Poems."[1] This volume, the only venture of Thomas in the book-trade, was published about midsummer, its receipt was advertised by the leading magazines,[2] and two years later, although the edition was small and obscure, it was still sufficiently known to find mention

[1] *Tamerlane and other Poems.* By a Bostonian. Boston: Calvin F. S. Thomas . . . Printer. 1827, pp. 40. The volume contained, besides preface and notes, *Tamerlane* and nine fugitive pieces: 1. *To* —— —— ("I saw thee on the bridal day"); 2. *Dreams;* 3. *Visit of the Dead;* 4. *Evening Star;* 5. *Imitation;* 6. No title ("In youth have I known one with whom the earth"); 7. No title ("A wilder'd being from my birth"); 8. No title ("The happiest day — the happiest hour"); 9. *The Lake.* Of these *Tamerlane* and the first, third, and ninth of the short poems are included, in revised versions, in Poe's works.

[2] *The United States Review and Literary Gazette,* ii, 399, (August, 1827); *The North American Review,* xxv, 471 (October, 1827).

in the first comprehensive work on American Poetry.[1]

There is, perhaps, some color of truth in the claim put forth in his boyishly affected preface that this volume was written in 1821–22. As that was the time when his mind would naturally rapidly unfold, and as the statement agrees with the tradition of a manuscript volume shown to Master Clarke by Mr. Allan, it is probable that some of the poems at least were then drafted; but from the passages that reveal the depressing influence of his own home and imply his experience of love, as well as from what is recorded of his habits at the University, it is clear that they were re-written, and really represent his genius at the stage it was in when they were printed. The precocity of the verses is marked, but it is a full-grown youth, not a child of thirteen, who has been bitten by the Byronic malady; and, indeed, striking as they are, their relief is mainly due to the light flashed back on them from Poe's perfect work.

"Tamerlane" in its first form shows more poetic susceptibility, if less literary power, than in its present one. In the story itself there is

[1] *Specimens of American Poetry*, by Samuel Kettell. Boston: S. G. Goodrich & Co., 1829: iii, p. 405.

little difference between the two versions. In both the great conqueror relates to a conventional friar how, in his boyhood, among the mountains of Taglay, he had loved a maiden, and stirred alike by his ambition for her and for himself had one day determined to go away and seek the empire which the prescience of genius assured him would be his. In pursuit of this plan, he says, without giving any hint of his departure or its purpose, he left her asleep in a matted bower; and, naturally enough, when, after the fulfillment of his hopes, he returned to seat her on "the throne of half the world," he found his destined bride had died in consequence of his desertion. *Hinc illae lachrymae.*

Neither in this tale nor in the nine fugitive pieces of a personal character which followed it was there anything to command public attention, especially as the style and spirit were distinctively imitative, the constructions involved, the meaning dark, and the measure as lame as the old Tartar himself is fabled to have been. The interest of the volume now lies partly in its plainly autobiographical passages, such as those which describe how conscious genius takes its own impulse for the unerring divine instinct, or express the poet's naïve and slightly

bitter resentment on finding himself not a prophet in his own household; and partly in the subtler self-revelation afforded by the reflection of passing poetic moods, which it may be remarked are surer signs of promise than poetic ideas, because, although they may as easily become conventional, they cannot be so successfully appropriated from others by patience and art, nor can their language ever ring true except *numine praesenti* by the very breath of the indwelling Apollo. Slow, confined, and stammering as is their expression in these earliest poems, they show that, however affected by the artificiality and turgidity, the false sentiment, the low motive, and the sensational accessories of pseudo-Byronism, the young poet turned naturally to his own experience, and could write from his heart.

In particular, two characteristics come out as primary in Poe's nature. He was one of the proudest of men, and from many expressions here it is plain that he cultivated pride, even in boyhood. He thought it the distinctive manly quality. He declares with emphasis that every nobly endowed soul, conscious of its power, will ever

"Find *Pride* the ruler of its will."

Byron had sown the evil seed, but it had fallen in very favorable soil. This personal trait, however, needs only to be glanced at in passing. The second characteristic belongs rather to his temperament, and affected his art more directly. The sight of beauty did not affect his æsthetic sense so much as it aroused his dreaming faculty. He looks out on the world as a vague and undefined delight; he notes only the broad and general features of the landscape; he does not see any object in detail: his imagination so predominates over his perceptive powers, he is so much more poet than artist, that he loses the beautiful in the suggestions, the reveries, the feelings it awakens, and this emotion is the value he found in beauty throughout his life. The mood was a part of his ordinary experience. Sometimes he describes it: —

> "In spring of life have ye ne'er dwelt
> Some object of delight upon,
> With steadfast eye, till ye have felt
> The earth reel — and the vision gone?"

Sometimes he expresses it (and in the lines is heard the first whisper of "Ligeia"): —

> "'T was the chilly wind
> Came o'er me in the night, and left behind
> Its image on my spirit."

This exaltation is continually the object of his regrets and of his longings; he ascribes to it a symbolic spiritual meaning, and even a moral power, as being something

> "given
> In beauty by our God, to those alone
> Who otherwise would fall from life and Heaven
> Drawn by their heart's passion —"

This value, whether true or false, which he gave to such emotional moods, is the significant thing in his poetic life, and shows that the dreaming faculty was a primary element in his genius. Sometimes, it is true, the real scene remains prominent in his mind; but even then, although it does not fade away into mere emotion, it is not unchanged; it ceases to be natural, and is removed into the preternatural. In two of these early poems — "The Lake" and "Visit of the Dead" — is this the case, and it is noticeable that Poe retained both among his works, as if he perceived that of all in this collection they alone have his peculiar touch. In the latter, especially, the treatment of landscape is wholly his own; crude as its expression is, it affords the first glimpse of that new tract of Acheron, as it were, which he revealed "out of space, out of time": —

"And the stars shall look not down
From their thrones, in the dark heaven,
With light like Hope to mortals given,
But their red orbs, without beam,
To thy withering heart shall seem
As a burning, and a fever
Which would cling to thee forever.
But 't will leave thee, as each star
In the morning light afar
Will fly thee —"

Such imaginings — the vision of the throned stars with averted faces, the identifying of the outer fascination of an ill-omened nature with the mortal fever within, the dissolving of the spell as the red orbs flee far in the streaming eastern light — might well portend in poetry a genius as original as was Blake's in art.

The abundant alloy in the substance of the work, however, and the rudeness of its execution justly condemned the volume to speedy oblivion. It brought neither fame to the poet nor money to the printer, and shortly after its publication Thomas removed to New York. Neither in his stay in that city nor during his later life in Buffalo, New York, and Springfield, Missouri, did Thomas, who lived until 1876, ever mention, either to his own family or, so far as is known, to his friends or associates, that his first venture in the book-trade was Poe's

verses. In view of this fact,[1] in connection with the general publication of reminiscences by all who were ever well acquainted with Poe, and the special interest of this obscure portion of his life, it may be safely inferred that Thomas never identified the first author he knew with the famous poet who wrote "The Raven." On October 31 the battery was ordered to Fort Moultrie, Charleston, South Carolina, and exactly one year later was again transferred to Fortress Monroe, Virginia. The character of Poe's life in the army can now be but imperfectly made out, since the officers under whom he served are dead; but from papers presently to be given it appears that he discharged his duties as company clerk and assistant in the commissariat department so as to win the good-will of his superiors, and was in all respects a faithful and efficient soldier. On January 1, 1829, he was appointed Sergeant-Major, a promotion which, by the invariable custom of the army, was made only for merit.

At some time after reaching Fortress Monroe he is said to have made his identity known to the Post Surgeon, Dr. Archer, who told his story

[1] Mrs. Martha (Thomas) Booth to the author, June 14, 1884.

to the commanding officer. These friends suggested to the young soldier that he should ask Mr. Allan to provide a substitute for him and obtain a cadetship at West Point, thus opening for him a military career suitable to his breeding and education. Poe acted on this advice. How much the Allans really knew of his whereabouts at the time is left uncertain. It is said that he had sent copies of "Tamerlane" to Richmond from Boston, and that his later letters to his foster-mother were dated St. Petersburg. The gist of the present letter was a request for help in bettering his position in the profession that he had himself chosen. How Mr. Allan received this appeal cannot be determined; but he apparently did not move in the matter until after the mortal illness of his wife, and it was on the occasion of her death, which occurred February 28, 1829, — on which day Poe is reported on the rolls as present for duty,— that the latter returned to Richmond on leave of absence granted by his colonel on Mr. Allan's application. He is said to have arrived on the day following the funeral, and must have immediately returned to his post. The result of his visit is told in the following letter, which betrays a surprising inaccuracy in some of its details: —

FORTRESS MONROE, March 30, '29.

GENERAL, — I request your permission to discharge from the service Edgar A. Perry, at present the Sergeant-Major of the 1st Reg't of Artillery, on his procuring a substitute.

The said Perry is one of a family of orphans whose unfortunate parents were the victims of the conflagration of the Richmond theatre in 1809. The subject of this letter was taken under the protection of a Mr. Allen, a gentleman of wealth and respectability, of that city, who, as I understand, adopted his protégé as his son and heir; with the intention of giving him a liberal education, he had placed him at the University of Virginia from which, after considerable progress in his studies, in a moment of youthful indiscretion he absconded, and was not heard from by his Patron for several years; in the mean time he became reduced to the necessity of enlisting into the service, and accordingly entered as a soldier in my Regiment, at Fort Independence, in 1827. Since the arrival of his company at this place he has made his situation known to his Patron, at whose request the young man has been permitted to visit him;[1] the result is, an entire reconciliation on the part

[1] There is no record of this furlough.

of Mr. Allen, who reinstates him into his family and favor, and who in a letter I have received from him requests that his son may be discharged on procuring a substitute; an experienced soldier and approved sergeant is ready to take the place of Perry so soon as his discharge can be obtained. The good of the service, therefore, cannot be materially injured by the discharge.

I have the honor to be,

With great respect, your obedient servant,

JAS. HOUSE,

Col. 1st Art'y.

To the General Commanding the
E. Dept. U. S. A., New York.

The official reply to this application was an order, dated April 4, in accordance with which Poe was discharged, by substitute, April 15. Before leaving his post he obtained the following letters from his officers, which show conclusively that he had already formed the plan of entering West Point: —

FORTRESS MONROE, VA., 20th Apl. 1829.

Edgar Poe, late Serg't-Major in the 1st Art'y, served under my command in H. company 1st Reg't of Artillery, from June, 1827, to January, 1829, during which time his conduct was un-

exceptionable. He at once performed the duties of company clerk and assistant in the Subsistent Department, both of which duties were promptly and faithfully done. His habits are good and intirely free from drinking.

J. HOWARD,
Lieut. 1st Artillery.

In addition to the above, I have to say that Edgar Poe[1] was appointed Sergeant-Major of the 1st Art'y: on the 1st of Jan'y, 1829, and up to this date, has been exemplary in his deportment, prompt and faithful in the discharge of his duties — and is highly worthy of confidence.

H. W. GRISWOLD,
Bt. Capt. and Adjt. 1st Art'y.

I have known and had an opportunity of observing the conduct of the above-mentioned Serg't-Maj^r^. Poe some three months, during which his deportment has been highly praiseworthy and deserving of confidence. His education is of a very high order and he appears to be free from bad habits, in fact the testimony of Lt. Howard and Adjt. Griswold is full to that point. Understanding he is, thro' his friends, an applicant for cadet's warrant, I unhesitatingly

[1] Originally written *Perry*, but changed to read *Poe*.

recommend him as promising to aquit himself of the obligations of that station studiously and faithfully.

W. J. WORTH,
Lt. Col. Comd'g Fortress Monroe.

With these credentials in his pocket, the discharged Sergeant-Major, aged twenty, went to Richmond, in the latter part of April, where no time was lost in attempting to place him at West Point. At Mr. Allan's request, Andrew Stevenson, the Speaker of the House, and Major John Campbell, under date of May 6, also wrote letters of recommendation, not of any interest now; and a week later James P. Preston, the father of one of Poe's closer school friends and representative of the district in Congress, lent his influence in these terms: —

RICHMOND, VA., May 13, 1829.

SIR, — Some of the friends of young Mr. Edgar Poe have solicited me to address a letter to you in his favor, believing that it may be useful to him in his application to the Government for military service. I know Mr. Poe and am acquainted with the fact of his having been born under circumstances of great adversity. I also know from his own productions and other un-

doubted proofs that he is a young gentleman of genius and taleants. I believe he is destined to be distinguished, since he has already gained reputation for taleants and attainments at the University of Virginia. I think him possessed of feeling and character peculiarly intitling him to public patronage. I am entirely satisfied that the salutary system of military discipline will soon develope his honorable feelings and elevated spirit, and prove him worthy of confidence. I would not write in his recommendation if I did not believe that he would remunerate the Government at some future day, by his services and taleants, for whatever may be done for him.

I have the honor to be

Very respectfully your obt. serv't,

JAMES P. PRESTON.

MAJOR JOHN EATON, Sec'y of War, Washington.

Of more interest than all these, however, is Mr. Allan's own communication: —

RICHMOND, May 6, 1829.

DR SIR, — The youth who presents this, is the same alluded to by Lt. Howard, Capt. Griswold, Colo. Worth, our representative and the speaker, the Hon'ble Andrew Stevenson, and my friend Major Jno. Campbell.

He left me in consequence of some gambling at the University at Charlottesville, because (I presume) I refused to sanction a rule that the shopkeepers and others had adopted there, making Debts of Honour of all indiscretions. I have much pleasure in asserting that he stood his examination at the close of the year with great credit to himself. His history is short. He is the grandson of Quartermaster-General Poe, of Maryland, whose widow as I understand still receives a pension for the services or disabilities of her husband. Frankly, Sir, do I declare that he is no relation to me whatever; that I have many [in] whom I have taken an active interest to promote theirs; with no other feeling than that, every man is my care, if he be in distress. For myself I ask nothing, but I do request your kindness to aid this youth in the promotion of his future prospects. And it will afford me great pleasure to reciprocate any kindness you can show him. Pardon my frankness; but I address a soldier.

Your ob'd't se'v't,

JOHN ALLAN.

THE HON'BLE JOHN H. EATON,
Sec'y of War, Washington City.

The coldness of feeling with which Mr. Allan here classes the boy he had brought up almost from infancy — a fact of which he makes no mention — with the objects of his common charity indicates clearly enough that, so far from intending to make Poe his heir, on the contrary he thought to be honorably rid of the burden of further patronage by having paid a sum of money for a substitute in the army, and helping to open a career for his protégé in his self-chosen profession. Such a letter must have been galling to Poe's pride. He presented it with the others to the Secretary of War in person.

In following a military career, Poe had never forgotten his literary hopes; and he now, seemingly, gave much more eager attention to letters than to arms. He had already begun that course of appeal to distinguished writers to recognize and advise him, which he continued through life. On the day when Mr. Allan was penning the words which described Poe as an object of his charity, William Wirt, author of the "Letters of a British Spy," was also writing a letter in which he advised the young poet to seek some less old-fashioned writer than himself to comment on the poem that had been sent for his perusal. This poem must have been "Al Aaraaf."

On his journey to Washington Poe made the closer acquaintance of his blood relations in Baltimore, where, pending his appointment as a cadet, he is said [1] to have lived with his aunt, Mrs. Clemm, afterwards his mother-in-law; it is noticeable that he did not return to Richmond at once, and that he was slenderly supplied with money. During his residence at Baltimore, which lasted six months or more, he published his second volume of poems, the fruit of his leisure in the army. He also had some obscure relations with William Gwynn, — he may have been employed by him, — then editor of the "Federal Gazette and Baltimore Daily Advertiser," and showed him the manuscript of "Al Aaraaf," which was declared to be "indicative of a tendency to anything but the business of matter-of-fact life." For this introduction the poet was probably indebted to Neilson Poe, his cousin at the third remove, who was in Gwynn's office; and it has been stated that it was at the suggestion of Neilson's father, George Poe, that he now sought the critical advice of John Neal, who had resided in Baltimore some few

[1] Mrs. Clemm stated in writing that Poe was living at her house at the time that his friends were endeavoring to procure for him a commission in the army; but all unsupported statements by her are open to doubt.

years before, and was editing the "Yankee" at Boston. In the correspondence columns of that periodical, in its issue for September, 1829, the following appeared: —

"If E. A. P. of Baltimore — whose lines about 'Heaven,' though he professes to regard them as altogether superior to anything in the whole range of American poetry, save two or three trifles referred to, are, though nonsense, rather exquisite nonsense — would but do himself justice might [sic] make a beautiful and perhaps a magnificent poem. There is a good deal here to justify such a hope.

"Dim vales and shadowy floods
And cloudy-looking woods,
Whose forms we can't discover,
For the tears that — drip all over.

. . . . . .

The moonlight . . .
. . . falls
Over hamlets, over halls,
Wherever they may be,
O'er the strange woods, o'er the sea —
O'er spirits on the wing,
O'er every drowsy thing —
And buries them up quite
In a labyrinth of light,
And then how deep! — *Oh deep!*
Is the passion of their sleep!"

He should have signed it Bah! We have no room for others."[1]

The tone of this indicates that Poe was not backed by any strong personal friend of the critic. He received the doubtful satire with good grace, however, and replied in a letter printed in the December issue, and prefaced by these editorial remarks: —

"The following passages are from the manuscript works of a young author, about to be published in Baltimore. He is entirely a stranger to us, but with all their faults, if the remainder of 'Al Aaraaf' and 'Tamerlane' are as good as the body of the extracts here given, to say nothing of the more extraordinary parts, he will deserve to stand high — very high — in the estimation of the shining brotherhood. Whether he *will* do so, however, must depend, not so much upon his worth now in mere poetry, as upon his worth hereafter in something yet loftier and more generous — we allude to the stronger properties of the mind, to the magnanimous determination that enables a youth to endure the present, whatever the present may be, in the hope, or rather in the belief, the fixed, unwavering belief, that in the future he will find his reward."

[1] *The Yankee and Boston Literary Gazette*, iii, 168 (new series).

The poet's letter follows: —

"I am young — not yet twenty — *am* a poet — if deep worship of all beauty can make me one — and wish to be so in the more common meaning of the word. I would give the world to embody one half the ideas afloat in my imagination. (By the way, do you remember — or did you ever read the exclamation of Shelley about Shakespeare? — 'What a number of ideas must have been afloat before such an author could arise!') I appeal to you as a man that loves the same beauty which I adore — the beauty of the natural blue sky and the sunshiny earth — there can be no tie more strong than that of brother for brother — it is not so much that they love one another, as that they both love the same parent — their affections are always running in the same direction — the same channel — and cannot help mingling. I am, and have been from my childhood, an idler. It cannot therefore be said that

> " 'I left a calling for this idle trade,
> A duty broke — a father disobeyed' —

for I have no father — nor mother.

"I am about to publish a volume of 'Poems,' the greater part written before I was fifteen. Speaking about 'Heaven' the editor of the 'Yan-

kee' says, 'He might write a beautiful, if not a magnificent poem' — (the very first words of encouragement I ever remember to have heard). I am very certain that as yet I have not written *either* — but that I *can*, I will take oath — if they will give me time.

"The poems to be published are 'Al Aaraaf' — 'Tamerlane' — one about four, and the other about three hundred lines, with smaller pieces. 'Al Aaraaf' has some good poetry, and much extravagance, which I have not had time to throw away.

"'Al Aaraaf' is a tale of another world — the star discovered by Tycho Brahe, which appeared and disappeared so suddenly — or rather, it is no tale at all. I will insert an extract about the palace of its presiding Deity, in which you will see that I have supposed many of the lost sculptures of our world to have flown (in spirit) to the star 'Al Aaraaf' — a delicate place more suited to their divinity: —

"'Uprear'd upon such height arose a pile,' etc."

After Poe's quotations from this poem and "Tamerlane," and from the verses now known in a revised form as "A Dream within a Dream," the editor concludes: —

"Having allowed our youthful writer to be

heard in his own behalf, — what more can we do for the lovers of genuine poetry? Nothing. They who are judges will not need more; and they who are not — why waste words upon them? We shall not."[1]

The volume[2] which gave rise to this correspondence was published at the close of the year. It was a thin book, but respectably printed, with a profusion of extra leaves bearing mottoes from English and Spanish poets, and with liberal margins. "Al Aaraaf," the leading poem, is generally regarded as incomprehensible. Its

[1] *The Yankee and Boston Literary Gazette*, vi, 295–298 (new series).

[2] *Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems*, by Edgar A. Poe. Baltimore: Hatch & Dunning, 1829: pp. 71. This volume begins with an unentitled sonnet, the first draft of *To Science*, continues with *Al Aaraaf* and *Tamerlane*, both nearly as now printed, and concludes with a *Preface*, now known, revised, as *Romance*, and nine miscellaneous poems: 1. *To* —— ("Should my early life seem"), forty lines, now printed, revised, as *A Dream within a Dream*; 2. *To* —— ("I saw thee on thy bridal day"); 3. *To* —— ("The bowers whereat, in dreams, I see"); 4. *To the River* ——; 5. *The Lake. To* ——; 6. *Spirits of the Dead*; 7. *A Dream*; 8. *To M* —— ("I heed not that my earthly lot"), twenty lines, now printed, revised, as *To* ——; 9. *Fairyland*, the lines entitled *Heaven* in *The Yankee*. Of these *Tamerlane*, of which the former edition is said to have been "suppressed," is wholly rewritten, and the second, fifth, sixth, and seventh of the miscellaneous poems are from the 1827 edition, but revised.

obscurity is largely due to Poe's attempting, not only to tell a story, but also to express in an allegoric form some truth which he had arrived at amid the uneventful leisure of the barracks. In the rapid growth of his intelligence, beauty, which had been merely a source of emotion, became an object of thought, — an idea as well as an inspiration. It was the first of the great moulding ideas of life that he apprehended. Naturally his juvenile fancy at once personified it as a maiden, Nesace, and, seeking a realm for her to preside over, found it in Al Aaraaf, — not the narrow wall between heaven and hell which in Moslem mythology is the place of the dead who are neither good nor bad, but the burning star observed by Tycho Brahe, which the poet imagines to be the abode of those spirits, angelic or human, who choose, instead of that tranquillity which makes the highest bliss, the sharper delights of love, wine, and pleasing melancholy, at the price of annihilation in the moment of their extremest joy. At this point the allegory becomes cumbrous, and the handling of it more awkward, because Poe tries to imitate Milton and Moore at the same time. By the use of incongruous poetic machinery, however, he contrives to say that beauty is the direct

revelation of the divine to mankind, and the protection of the soul against sin. The action of the maiden in whom beauty is personified begins with a prayer descriptive of the Deity, who in answer directs her, through the music of the spheres, to leave the confines of our earth and guide her wandering star to other worlds, which she should guard against the contagion of evil,—

> "Lest the stars totter in the guilt of man."

In obedience to this mandate she chants an incantation in which she calls upon her subjects, and especially her handmaid Ligeia, the personified harmony of nature, to attend her. At this point the allegory terminates, and the story begins. It now appears that among the inhabitants of Al Aaraaf are two, Angelo and Ianthe, who cannot hear the summons because of their mutual passion, and so in reminiscences of the past and dreams of the future, unmindful, the lovers

> "whiled away
> The night that waned and waned and brought no day."

Here, with singular abruptness, the poem concludes.

Of course, as serious work it was a failure. After "Queen Mab," "Heaven and Earth," or

even "The Loves of the Angels," it was pardonable only in a boy. The obscure allegory, the absence of any structural relation between it and the brief romance, the discordant influence of other poets who had broken Byron's ascendency over Poe's mind, and finally the style itself, with its long and ill-timed parentheses, its inconsequential pursuit of image into image and thought into thought, until all consistency in the meaning is lost, and other analogous defects of youthful composition, combine their separate elements of confusion to make the poem seemingly unintelligible. In fact, it seems as if Poe had stopped without completing his original conception; as if he found his constructive power too weak, and broke off without trying to unify or clarify his work. Nevertheless, it shows a gain of both mental and literary power; it has, too, a lively fancy, a flowing metre, and occasionally a fine line, that place it above "Tamerlane" as a product of crude genius. In particular, the characteristics of Poe, the attempt to seize the impalpable, to fix the evanescent, to perceive the supersensual, are strongly marked; and although the management is in general as much Moore's as that of "Tamerlane" is Byron's, and there is nothing original in its substance except

the symbolization of the pervasive music of nature in Ligeia, it proved that the author had a poetic faculty, and, if he could break from his masters and learn the clear use of words, was well starred.

The remainder of this pamphlet-like volume is, biographically, of little consequence. "Tamerlane," wholly rewritten, has gained in rhetorical effectiveness, though it has lost in spontaneity, and in its present form is as clever and uninteresting an imitation of Byron as was ever printed. In some of the personal pieces, too, in which Poe takes the traditional attitude of the Pilgrim toward his past bliss and present desolation, Byron's influence continues strong. The ruling genius of the hour, however, was plainly Moore, who in his poems supplied a model to be imitated, and in his prefaces and notes information to be either worked up into verse, or transferred bodily to the foot of the new pages. In the annotations to "Al Aaraaf," Poe began the practice, which he continued through life, of making a show of learning by mentioning obscure names and quoting learned authorities at second hand. Among the sources used by him, besides Moore's notes, Chateaubriand's "Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem" is of most interest,

since that author afforded suggestions for later work. On a line of the last page he himself comments with a sort of bravado: "Plagiarism — see the works of Thomas Moore — passim"; but, curiously enough, this occurs in the only one of the new poems which bears the mark of his originality. It is "Fairyland," the sketch of the mist lighted by the moon, — the broad, pallid glamour descending at midnight on the vaporing earth, drowsing all things into deep slumber beneath its elfish light, and at noon soaring like a yellow albatross in far-off skies. There is a unique character in this imagery that makes it linger in the memory when the crudities of its expression are forgotten.

After the issue of this volume toward the holidays Poe returned to Richmond, where, on the second evening after his arrival, he met a companion of his school-days, to whom he told a story of romantic adventures to account for his years of absence, and gave *carte blanche* for copies of his poems at the booksellers, to be distributed among his former friends. While "Al Aaraaf" was puzzling those to whom it came as a kind of Christmas gift, and was struggling against the private merriment of the young wits of Baltimore and the public gibes of the literary

oracle of that city, "The Minerva and Emerald," edited by John H. Hewitt, Poe, who had his old room in the Allan house called "Edgar's room,"[1] waited for his commission perhaps with some anxiety, as he reached and passed the age of twenty-one, the legal limit within which he could be appointed. Poe's attainment of his majority was not regarded as an insuperable obstacle. It was as easy to grow two years younger now as it had been to grow four years older when he enlisted, and he had already made up his mind to this rejuvenation some months before, when he wrote to John Neal that he was "not yet twenty." Relying on this fiction, he solicited the influence of Powhatan Ellis, a younger brother of Mr. Allan's partner, and then United States Senator from Mississippi, who wrote to Secretary Eaton, March 13, recommending him, not from any personal acquaintance, but on information[2] from others. This letter received

[1] *The Richmond Despatch* (by X.), March 18, 1894.

[2] This may have been furnished by Judge Marshall and General Scott, whose wife was a cousin of the second Mrs. Allan, but of their interference, first alleged by Hirst ("Edgar A. Poe," *Philadelphia Saturday Museum*, March 4, 1843) but noted as current at West Point, in 1830, by General Magruder, and repeated by later biographers (Mr. Stoddard adds the name of John Randolph), there is no record.

immediate attention. Poe was forthwith appointed a cadet, and on March 31 Mr. Allan gave his formal consent as guardian to his ward's binding himself to serve the United States for five years. The die being cast, Mr. Allan furnished Poe with whatever was necessary, and he probably thought that his duty by the child he had adopted was finally done. Poe started North; he stopped at Baltimore, where he called upon Mr. Nathan C. Brooks,[1] a young littérateur, and read, and engaged to send to him, a poem for a forthcoming annual; and, either on this visit or during his previous stay in Baltimore, which seems more likely, he met an old schoolmate, from whom he received some financial assistance, and to whom he gave the same romantic account of his years of absence as he had given on a similar occasion in Richmond. "I remember," writes this gentleman, "he told me he had left Richmond in a coal vessel, and made his way to Europe, to Russia."[2] Poe went on

A slight corroborating circumstance, however, is found in the fact that a copy of an early edition of Poe's poems was found in General Scott's library.

[1] Dr. Nathan C. Brooks to the author, June 3, 1884. All subsequent statements regarding the relations of Poe and Brooks are made on the same authority.

[2] —— to the author, June 2, 1884.

to West Point, but he sent no contribution to Mr. Brooks.

The natural construction to be placed on the foregoing story would seem to be that Poe's officers, becoming acquainted with his ability and education and being interested in his character and history, advised him to go to West Point, the only way in which he could rise in the service; and that Mr. Allan, in compliance with the dying request of his wife, recalled him, provided a substitute, and agreed to befriend him further on the distinct understanding that he should go to West Point, but with no intention of making him his heir. The fact that during the fifteen months intervening between Poe's discharge at Fortress Monroe and his entrance at West Point, he lived mainly apart from Mr. Allan, though he had his old room in the house, indicates the incompleteness of the reconciliation, as does also Mr. Allan's tone in writing of him. It is also to be remarked that Mr. Allan, soon after the death of his first wife, desired to make a second marriage, and offered his hand to her sister, Miss Valentine, known to Poe as "Aunt Fanny," and was rejected; in this refusal she is said to have been supported by Poe, to whom she was warmly attached. Mr. Allan,

some months later, met the lady whom he afterwards married, who was of excellent family and thirty years old; it is plain enough that, being without an heir to his fortune, he hoped to found a family of his own.

Poe entered the Military Academy on July 1, 1830, and settled at No. 28, South Barracks. His age is recorded as being then nineteen years and five months, but to the cadets he seemed older, and it was jokingly reported among them, much to Poe's annoyance, that "he had procured a cadet's appointment for his son, and the boy having died the father had substituted himself in his place." [1] His room-mate, who tells this anecdote, recalls his expression as weary, worn, and discontented, and his conversation on literary topics as without exception carping and censorious. The three occupants of the room, it is added, gave it a bad reputation; and Poe, in particular, besides joining his two fellows in the consumption of brandy, totally neglected his studies. The features of this sketch, notwithstanding its being drawn by one of the actors, seem too grim. On others of his classmates he left a more agreeable impression. One of them,

[1] *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, xxxv, 754 (November, 1867).

General Allan B. Magruder, writes of him as a fellow "of kindly spirit and simple style," and continues his brief reminiscences as follows: —

"He was very shy and reserved in his intercourse with his fellow-cadets — his associates being confined almost exclusively to Virginians. He was by several years my senior, and had led a wild, adventurous life, traveling in Europe and the East, and was a seaman, I think, on board a whaler. He was an accomplished French scholar, and had a wonderful aptitude for mathematics, so that he had no difficulty in preparing his recitations in his class and in obtaining the highest marks in these departments. He was a devourer of books, but his great fault was his neglect of and apparent contempt for military duties. His wayward and capricious temper made him at times utterly oblivious or indifferent to the ordinary routine of roll-call, drills, and guard duties. These habits subjected him often to arrest and punishment, and effectually prevented his learning or discharging the duties of a soldier."[1]

This account is supported by the official records, which show that at the examination at the end of the half-year Poe stood third in French

[1] Allan B. Magruder to the author, April 23, 1884.

WEST POINT ABOUT 1830

and seventeenth in mathematics, in a class of eighty-seven members; he was not in arrest, however, before January, and whether he incurred minor academic censure for neglect of his military duties cannot be determined, as the books were destroyed by fire in 1838. His life at West Point did not differ from his course at the University, except that his predominant literary taste, which found expression in talk about the poets and pasquinades on the academy officials, isolated him among his associates, while the custom of the place and his own lack of means forbade gambling. He was older, and consequently more discontented and unsettled; moreover, he had drunk deeper of the Pierian spring, and was still endeavoring to publish verses in the magazines. It is to be remembered, especially with regard to his neglect of study, that he had already received an excellent education and did not need to study in order to maintain his standing. As before, he bore his share in the follies of his mates, and his greater neglect of routine duty may be ascribed in part to its increased irksomeness to him after his year of freedom from military restraints; but, in any case, what was to be expected of a cadet who was more interested in his bud of poetry than in either drill or escapade?

In October, 1830, his sonnet, "To Science," was reprinted in the Philadelphia "Casket."

He passed, in the Academy, as has been seen, for the hero of the romantic tale of travel which he had told at once, on leaving the army, to two old schoolmates at least, and which, if, as is said, his letters to Mrs. Allan were dated from St. Petersburg, had an earlier root. General Magruder writes further: "I am unable to remember whether I derived the information I gave you in a former letter as to Poe's rambles in the East, and his whaling voyage before the mast, from Poe himself while a classmate at West Point, or from some mutual friend who derived the account from him. I certainly learned it while he was at the Military Academy." The writer goes on to give the story then current, as follows: "He made a voyage to sea on some merchant vessel, before the mast. Finding himself in the Mediterranean, he debarked at some Eastern port and penetrated into Egypt and Arabia. Returning to the United States, he enlisted as a private in the United States Army at Fortress Monroe. After some months' service his whereabouts and position became known to Mr. Allan, who, through the mediation of General Scott, obtained his release from the

army, and sent him a cadet's warrant to West Point."[1]

It was, perhaps, on the voyages of his elder brother, in Baltimore, who had visited Greece and St. Petersburg, that Poe drew for this narrative. If he ever went on a voyage before the mast, as, in view of his nautical knowledge, is not altogether unlikely, it must have been between January and May, 1827, possibly on his way from Richmond to Boston. The experience he certainly had, as the basis of the knowledge he displays, was his ocean voyages in boyhood, and those of his regiment in its changes from post to post, besides the information he would naturally have acquired during a two years' residence by the sea.

During the first six months at West Point, Poe made up his mind to leave the service. Another incident is said to have occurred in his dealings with Mr. Allan, of which the precise date is not stated. It is related in a letter of the second Mrs. Allan: —

"As regards Edgar Poe, of my own knowledge I know nothing; I only saw him twice; but all I heard of him, from those who had lived with him, was a tissue of ingratitude, fraud, and deceit.

[1] See *Appendix, Poe at West Point.*

Mr. Poe had not lived under Mr. Allan's roof for two years before my marriage; and no one knew his whereabouts; his letters, which were very scarce, were dated from St. Petersburg, Russia, although he had enlisted in the army at Boston. After he became tired of army life he wrote to his benefactor, expressing a desire to have a substitute if the money could be sent to him. Mr. Allan sent it, Poe spent it; and after the substitute was tired out, waiting, and getting letters and excuses, he (the substitute) enclosed one of Poe's letters to Mr. Allan, which was too black to be credited if it had not contained the author's signature. Mr. Allan sent the money to the man and banished Poe from his affections; and he never lived there again. I must say, in justice, I never influenced Mr. Allan against him in the slightest degree; indeed, I would not have presumed to have interfered or advised concerning him. Poe was never spoken of between us."[1]

[1] Mrs. Allan to Thomas H. Ellis, *The Richmond Standard*, April 22, 1880. Mrs Allan was an interested witness, but this narrative must be held to represent her memory of the circumstances after a lapse of years. It is the only published statement by her, and was lately reprinted in "Historic Homes of Richmond," by Louise Allan Mayo, *The Richmond News, Illustrated Saturday Magazine*, July 28, 1900.

It may well be that this incident, if correctly told, whether earlier or later than his entrance into the Academy, affected Poe's decision to end his service; but, in any event, literature had become his ruling passion, and this fact settled his career for him. On January 5, 1831, a court-martial was convened at West Point, to try offenders against discipline, and after a short sitting adjourned until January 28. For the two weeks preceding this adjourned meeting Poe neglected practically all his duties as a cadet, and was consequently cited to appear before the court and answer to two charges of two specifications each, to the effect that he had absented himself from certain parades, roll-calls, guard duty, and academical duties, and in the course of this remissness had twice directly disobeyed the orders of the officer of the day. He pleaded guilty to all, except one specification, and as it was the one alleging the most patent of his offenses — his absence from parade, roll-call, and guard duty — he thus shut the gates of mercy on himself. The court found him guilty, and passed a sentence of dismissal, which, however, in order that his pay might suffice to meet his debts to the Academy, they, as was usual in such cases, recommended should not take effect until March

6; on February 8, 1831, the Secretary of War approved the proceedings of the court, and ordered the sentence to be executed in accordance with the recommendation.

Poe's version of the dismissal, given in later years, was that the birth of an heir to Mr. Allan by his second wife had destroyed his own expectations of inheriting the estate, and Mr. Allan having refused to allow him to resign his commission, he intentionally so acted as to be dismissed in order to be free to follow some other profession better suited to a poor man than that of arms. Mr. Allan was married October 5, 1830, and there was no heir born when Poe's offenses against discipline were committed in January; the marriage alone, therefore, existed as a determining cause at that time. There was nothing new in the situation, except the fact of the marriage. The marriage may have been a surprise to him by its speed, and if he did actually resign in December, as one tradition asserts, he would seem to have acted in resentment at the marriage and in a spirit of hopelessness; but Mr. Allan's refusal to honor his resignation forced him to take heroic measures. From Mr. Allan's letter to the Secretary of War it must be believed that he never looked on Poe as an heir,

and Poe must have known it, however much he indulged hopes, while his own conduct since he left the army, if the Allan tradition be accepted, had been such as to confirm Mr. Allan in his attitude; all that he could expect reasonably was that Mr. Allan would make some provision for him, if he continued in the army; and this was what he risked by his dismissal, brought about by himself, if indeed, under all the circumstances, he believed he risked anything. Poe left West Point, one can be quite sure, from mingled motives and under the pressure of many circumstances; he was in one of those moments of youthful life when character and conduct combine to culminate in a passing crisis, and which are often fateful; it is thus that many another literary genius has followed his own star. Poe had preferred the military to the commercial career, and now he preferred the literary to the military career; at the moment, as will be seen, he plainly looked on himself as wholly alone in the world.

On the morning of March 7, 1831, Poe found himself as free as he had been in Boston four years before, when he first entered the service, and penniless, since only twenty-four cents remained to his credit. Possibly additional

funds were provided from the subscription of the cadets to a new edition of his poems, which he proposed to publish in New York through Mr. Elam Bliss, a reputable publisher. General Magruder gives this account of the affair: —

"The cadets, especially from the South, generally subscribed at seventy-five cents a copy, which the superintendent allowed to be deducted from our pay. I think the publisher came up from New York and bargained with Poe for its publication. The sum thus raised enabled him, I suppose, to save a small margin for his traveling expenses and necessities beyond the cost of publication. The book was not supplied to the subscribers until some time after he left the Point. It was a miserable production mechanically, bound in green boards and printed on inferior paper, evidently gotten up on the cheapest scale. The subscription was not fully paid until the book was delivered, and I remember a general expression of indignation at the inferior quality and condition of the book. . . . He went to New York, and there obtained, as I heard afterward, some literary employment which afforded him scant support." [1]

Poe went at once to New York and soon

[1] Allan B. Magruder to the author, July 1, 1884.

wrote to the Superintendent of the Academy, disclosing his plans, in forming which he may have remembered Lafayette's friendship for his grandfather and the personal introduction he had probably received at Richmond as the boy-lieutenant of the "Junior Morgan Riflemen": —

NEW YORK, March 10, 1831.

SIR, — Having no longer any ties which can bind me to my native country — no prospects — nor any friends — I intend by the first opportunity to proceed to Paris with the view of obtaining thro' the interest of the Marquis de La Fayette an appointment (if possible) in the Polish Army.

In the event of the interference of France in behalf of Poland this may easily be effected — at all events it will be my only feasible plan of procedure.

The object of this letter is respectfully to request that you will give me such assistance as may lie in your power in furtherance of my views.

A certificate of "standing" in my class is all that I have any right to expect.

Anything farther — a letter to a friend in Paris — or to the Marquis — would be a kind-

ness which I should never forget. Most respectfully, Yr. obt. s't., EDGAR A. POE.[1]

COL. S. THAYER, Supt. U. S. M. A.

He at once abandoned this plan, and his mates at West Point seem to have heard little of him when he was recalled to their minds some weeks later by the arrival of the volume of verse which General Magruder has described.

The book, which was entitled simply "Poems,"[2] purported to be a second edition

[1] From the Library of the Association of Graduates of West Point. This letter was, doubtless, the source of Powell's statement that Poe went to help the Poles against Russia.

[2] *Poems.* By Edgar A. Poe. Second edition. New York. Published by Elam Bliss, 1831: pp. 124. This volume is dedicated to the United States Corps of Cadets, and opens with a preparatory letter to Mr. ——, dated West Point, 1831, and addressed "Dear B——"; it contains: 1. *Introduction,* 66 lines, an expansion of *Preface* in the 1829 edition; 2. *To Helen;* 3. *Israfel,* 44 lines; 4. *The Doomed City,* 58 lines, the first version of *The City in the Sea;* 5. *Fairyland,* 64 lines, an expansion of the poem of the same name in the 1829 edition; 6. *Irene,* 74 lines, the first version of *The Sleeper;* 7. *A Pæan,* 44 lines, the first version of *Lenore;* 8. *The Valley Nis,* 46 lines, the first version of *The Valley of Unrest;* 9. *Al Aaraaf,* slightly revised, and introduced as in the 1829 edition by "*To Science*"; 10. *Tamerlane,* again considerably revised, particularly by the insertion of *The Lake* in a new form, and of lines from *To* —— ("Should my early life seem"), from the 1829 edition. Each poem has a bastard title, and the volume

of the Baltimore volume, from which it differed in many of its readings, and materially by the omission of six short poems and the addition of the first forms of "To Helen," "The Sleeper," "Lenore," "The Valley of Unrest," "The City in the Sea," and "Israfel." In the expansion of the earlier poems and of "Fairyland" in particular, Poe approached very near to the inane, but in the half-dozen new ones, inferior as they are to the revised versions now known, his genius first became manifest both in the character of his poetic motives and in the fascination of some perfect lines. The first three are based on his own experience, and are essentially personal, — an imaginative amplification of the lines of the "Introduction": —

> "I could not love except where Death
> Was mingling his with Beauty's breath, —
> Or Hymen, Time, and Destiny
> Were stalking between her and me."

Of these, however, "To Helen," which has been overpraised, owes much of its finish to the slight changes since made in it. "Irene," although impressive in conception and original in handling, is far too rude to be regarded as more than a

is further pieced out by mottoes, to each of which a page is given.

poem of some promise, and the "Pæan" is happily forgotten. The remaining three, which are developed from slight Oriental suggestions, are of a different kind. In these for the first time the strangeness and distance and mystical power of Poe's imagination are so given as to be henceforth identified with his genius. Two are landscape effects. In one, far down in the east, the Valley of Unrest discloses its tremulous trees beneath the ceaseless flow of swift-motioned clouds, — a glow of deep color; and in the other, as far in the west, gleams the weird diablerie of that strange city lying all alone in its glare and gloom, shadowed in those black waves: —

> "Around by lifting winds forgot
> Resignedly beneath the sky
> The melancholy waters lie."

The melodious monotone, the justness of touch in lines like these, are as artistic as the idea is poetic. But fine as is the substance of these two poems and excellent as is the execution at its best, neither rises to the rank of "Israfel," in which rings out the lyric burst, the first pure song of the poet, the notes most clear and liquid and soaring of all he ever sang, that waken and tremble in the first inspiration not less magnetically because narrower in compass and lower

in flight than in the cadences of the perfected song.

As his genius had developed, Poe had formed a theory of poetry, which he expressed, so far as he had made it out to himself, in the prefatory "Letter to Mr. ——." In this, after some thin logic to the effect that pleasure instead of utility is the end of all rational human activity, and consequently of poetry, he subjects Wordsworth's theories and practice to a very supercilious criticism, and asserts that poetry should be pursued as "a passion," not as "a study," since "learning has little to do with the imagination — intellect with the passions — or age with poetry"; at the end he sums up his creed in an article which shows the strong influence of Coleridge's criticism, as follows: —

"A poem in my opinion, is opposed to a work of science by having, for its *immediate* object, pleasure, not truth: to romance, by having for its object an *indefinite* instead of a definite pleasure, being a poem only so far as this object is attained; romance presenting perceptible images with definite, poetry with *in*definite, sensations, to which end music is an *essential*, since the comprehension of sweet sound is our most indefinite conception. Music, when combined with a plea-

surable idea, is poetry; music without the idea is simply music; the idea without the music is prose from its very definiteness."

These crude generalizations, together with the incidental remarks that no one enjoys long poems, and that delicacy is the poet's peculiar kingdom, are the fundamental ideas out of which he afterward slowly developed and finally perfected his poetic theory; to the canons thus laid down he submitted his own practice the more easily because they were consonant with his own genius.

For the present neither his statement of the poetic ideal nor his attempted illustration of it interested the world. A contemporary notice [1] says: "The poetry of this little volume has a plausible air of imagination, inconsistent with the general indefiniteness of the ideas. Everything in the language betokens poetic inspiration, but it rather resembles the leaves of the sybil when scattered by the winds." The critic finds in the book only occasional sparkles of "a true poetic expression"; but he was evidently interested and attracted, since he read it twice.

Poe may have remained in the city, pending

[1] From a newspaper cutting, without name or date, under the head "Literary Notices."

the publication, to read proofs. He soon went South, but it is not likely that he returned to Richmond. Mrs. Allan did not recognize him when she saw him soon after; he plainly looked on himself as homeless. Mr. Allan, though he did not abandon him, regarded him as ungrateful, reckless, and untrustworthy; and Poe's long-continued conduct toward him, to say the least, had been that of a son who, since he wished his own will, ought to make his own way.

CHAPTER IV

THE YOUNG ROMANCER

Poe settled at Baltimore among his kindred. He found there his elder brother, William Henry Leonard, then twenty-four years old, who had been reared by his grandfather, General Poe. This young man, who was then thought more brilliant than Edgar, was possessed of much grace, with gifts of voice and manner and with poetical tastes such that he wrote verses and even published them. He was a wild youth and had been sent on voyages abroad, but this may have been due also to his weak constitution; he was now in Baltimore and rapidly failing, and must have been an associate of Edgar during the few remaining months that he lived; he died in July. There is no record of Poe's having lived elsewhere in Baltimore than with his father's sister, Mrs. Clemm, with whom she said he lived during his earlier stay, in 1829. She had married a widower, who had died February 8, 1826; besides herself, her household consisted of a daughter aged nine, who afterwards married

Poe, and a step-daughter who married Neilson Poe. The place of her residence is not determined by any document earlier than the spring of 1831,[1] when she lived modestly in the upper story of a small dwelling-house, and took in sewing. There were besides, in Baltimore, the families of two cousins, one Neilson Poe, the other Miss Herring, with both of whom Poe had constant communication. He received, from 1833, if not before, an annuity from Mr. Allan, and to this were added for his support his slender earnings, if indeed there were any earnings. He was beginning his literary career; his situation was that of a young writer who had not yet disclosed his powers with effect and was waiting for opportunity and recognition; meanwhile, so far as can now be gathered, he lived during these years, certainly from 1831 if not from the beginning, in the humble home of his kindred and shared their fortunes, contributing his allowance from Mr. Allan to the general stock.

Immediately on his arrival in the city he asked employment of his former acquaintance, William Gwynn, the editor, and it is noticeable that the form of his application shows that he still kept on some terms with Mr. Allan: —

[1] *Matchett's Baltimore Director*, 1831.

May 6, 1831.

MR. W. GWYNN:

Dear Sir, — I am almost ashamed to ask any favour at your hands after my foolish conduct upon a former occasion — but I trust to your good nature.

I am very anxious to remain and settle myself in Baltimore, as Mr. Allan has married again and I no longer look upon Richmond as my place of residence.

This wish of mine has also met with his approbation. I wish to request your influence in obtaining some situation or employment in this city. Salary would be a minor consideration, but I do not wish to be idle.

Perhaps (since I understand Neilson has left you) you might be so kind as to employ me in your office in some capacity.

If so I will use every exertion to deserve your confidence. Very respectfully yr. ob. st.,

EDGAR A. POE.

I would have waited upon you personally, but am confined to my room with a severe sprain in my knee.[1]

Mr. Gwynn seems not to have exercised the

[1] Poe to Gwynn, MS.

Christian grace of forgiveness. Within a few weeks Poe turned to another Baltimore acquaintance, Mr. Brooks, who had recently opened a school at Reisterstown, not far from the city, and offered himself as an assistant; but of this, too, nothing came.

The only intimate knowledge of him during these years comes from the slender evidence of two young girls and a literary youth; all represent him as living with Mrs. Clemm. The reminiscences of the former are romantic, and continue the tale of his flirtations, so lucklessly begun with Miss Royster in Richmond, to his experiences with whom must be referred many passages of his poems in the three early volumes. He had long recovered from this youthful disappointment, and the course of mortal love ran again in its ordinary channels. He had been from boyhood fond of girls. He turned his attention to his fair cousin, Miss Herring, who was now sixteen. She dates his calls upon her positively from 1830 to 1834, and says, "He came at short intervals on flying visits from Philadelphia and other places."[1] Her sister was within a few

[1] Evidence that depends only on the memory of a long-past event is always open to question. This impression of the intermittent character of Poe's residence is perhaps due to the

days of the same age as Virginia Clemm, and a cousinly intimacy existed between the families. "Almost always his visits to her were during the morning or afternoon, when he could see her alone. His attentions to her were not approved of by her father, first because he was her cousin, and then for the reason that he considered him poor and inclined to drink. It was on these occasions that he would write verses in her album, call her his fair cousin, and read aloud to her, and was generally fascinating. In 1834, at eighteen, she was married and went to live in Virginia, and the pleasant visits and intercourse were at an end for a time." [1]

The second group of similar reminiscences is more exciting. It comes from an unnamed lady.[2] She lived in the neighborhood, and Poe's attentions to her began by an exchange of handkerchief signals, and lasted from summer to summer for a year; she was seventeen years old.

length of time covered; after he first met his relatives in Baltimore in 1829, he is known to have been absent three times in Richmond, once at West Point, and once in Philadelphia.

[1] Miss A. F. Poe to the author, September 13, 1884, written immediately after an interview with the subject of the letter.

[2] *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, lxxviii, 634 (March, 1889). The most satisfactory date, in view both of what is said and what is omitted, is 1832–33.

She relates that he visited her every evening, strolled with her, offered marriage, and on one summer night, being near a minister's house, said, "Come, Mary, let us go and get married; we might as well get married now as any other time." She was frightened, and ran home. She describes him as then recently from West Point, and says that the other girls were afraid of him, and forsook her company on account of her flirtation. Her family opposed the match; and the final break was occasioned by a visit to her late in the evening, after a tavern dinner with some of his West Point classmates whom he had casually met, at an earlier hour, on his way to her house. He had been drinking champagne, but this was the only time that year that she knew him to take anything of the sort or saw any trace of indulgence. His behavior, which is described in vivid detail, was a youthful example of his conduct in later life on such occasions; in consequence of it he was forbidden the house and his letters, which were always brought by Virginia, were returned unopened; but, on his continuing his solicitation, she opened one, and showed it to her family. A middle-aged uncle, whom Poe especially disliked, took it upon himself to write a note to the youth, who was also

publicly complaining in verse of her inconstancy; but the interference was unfortunate, inasmuch as it resulted in Poe's visiting the writer at his place of business and cowhiding him, after which Poe went to the house of the young lady, called for her father, told him what he had done, and cast the cowhide at her feet, saying, "There, I make you a present of that." She was afterwards married, and went to the North. She remarks that she knew none of Poe's male friends.

These twin accounts of the feminine side of Poe's life are supplemented by the recollections of Lambert A. Wilmer, a young journalist, who, in 1833, edited the new weekly literary paper, the "Baltimore Saturday Visiter": "My acquaintance with Poe," he says, "commenced in Baltimore soon after his return from St. Petersburg. . . . His time appeared to be constantly occupied by his literary labors; he had already published a volume of poems, and written several of those minor romances which afterwards appeared in the collection called 'Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque.' He lived in a very retired way with his aunt, Mrs. Clemm, and his moral deportment, as far as my observation extended, was altogether correct. . . . In his youthful days Poe's personal appearance was

delicate and effeminate, but never sickly or ghastly, and I never saw him in any dress which was not fashionably neat, with some approximation to elegance. Indeed, I often wondered how he could continue to equip himself so handsomely, considering that his pecuniary resources were generally scanty and precarious enough. My intercourse with Poe was almost continuous for weeks together. Almost every day we took long walks in the rural districts near Baltimore, and had long conversations on a great variety of subjects. . . . His general habits at that time were strictly temperate, and but for one or two incidents I might have supposed him to be a member of the cold-water army."[1]

The incidents referred to were, first, one occasion when Poe set out some Jamaica rum at his lodgings, a customary courtesy in the South, and drank moderately with his guest; and a second, when Mrs. Clemm scolded the young man for coming home intoxicated the night before from a tavern supper, plainly the same mentioned above, but as if it were a rare occurrence. It is, however, singular, if Wilmer were at all Poe's confidant, that he, who must have known of the

[1] "Recollections of Edgar A. Poe," by L. A. Wilmer, *Baltimore Daily Commercial*, May 23, 1866.

public scandal of Poe's fracas, and who probably published in his paper the satirical poem to the young lady, should have elsewhere described Poe as "the most passionless" of all the men he had ever known. Poe was never indifferent to women and always fascinated them, young or old. The picture of Poe's figure corresponds with other slight traces of his appearance. Hewitt, who was later his successful rival in verse, says he "wore Byron collars and a black stock, and looked the poet all over." In his features there was, undoubtedly, a delicacy which was perhaps the pallor of his Southern complexion; his companion, who was of a coarser fibre, mistook his refinement for effeminacy, but perceived that he was possessed of quick sympathies and an affectionate disposition.[1]

Poe's relations with the Allan family during

[1] Wilmer, in the account of his own life, without dates (*Our Press Gang; or, A Complete Exposition of the Corruptions and Crimes of the American Newspapers.* By Lambert A. Wilmer (ex-editor). Philadelphia: J. T. Lloyd, 1859), says he went from Washington to Baltimore to edit the *Visiter*, and was its editor not much longer than six months, when he lost his place, and soon after left the city. From this and his mention of Poe's tales as already written, as well as from the date of the *Visiter*, it is necessary to connect these recollections with the year 1833, and especially with its latter part, when Poe won the prize in the *Visiter's* competition.

these years were not friendly, but neither were they completely broken. He was given an allowance by Mr. Allan, and there was some correspondence and one visit. In the summer of 1831, three weeks after the birth of an heir to Mr. Allan, Poe went to Richmond and, according to the Allan tradition, made his way to the bedroom of the mother, reviled her and the baby, and was ejected from the house by the butler.[1] It must have been on this occasion that, as is said, he threw stones at the house. He refers to this visit in his autographic memorandum[2] of a later date: "Mrs. A[llan] and myself quarreled, and he [Mr. Allan], siding with her, wrote me an angry letter, to which I replied in the same spirit." His own version of what took place on his first return to the house was preserved by the MacKenzies. He behaved as if he expected to be treated as a member of the family, asked for Miss Valentine, and gave his bag to the servant to be taken to his own old room. He was told that his room had been converted into a guest-chamber and his personal belongings put in another small room; and, on Mrs. Allan's appear-

[1] *The Virginia Poe*, i, 112.

[2] *Ibid.* i, 344. The memorandum was found among the Griswold papers.

ance, he reproached her for this treatment, high words passed, and, Mr. Allan being appealed to by messenger, Poe was told to leave the house. He had no conversation with Mr. Allan, who entered as he left; he went to the MacKenzies, where he told the tale, and, receiving money from them and Miss Valentine, he returned to Baltimore.[1] The exchange of letters seems to have followed, and written communications continued, however infrequently, through these years. His inamorata refers to such correspondence. "Poe once gave me," she says, "a letter to read from Mr. Allan, in which the latter said, referring to me, that if he married any such person he would cut him off without a shilling." Poe was then receiving an annuity from Mr. Allan, sufficient for his support, as he later told Mr. Kennedy. It is clear, if there was any basis

[1] It will be observed that the family tradition here divides into the Allan tradition, proceeding from Mrs. Allan and set forth by Colonel Ellis and Miss Mayo, and the MacKenzie-Valentine tradition set forth by Mrs. Weiss. To the former belong the darker phases of the story of Poe's relations with Mr. Allan; to the latter belong Poe's versions and the kindlier narrative. Mrs. Weiss (*The Home Life of Poe*, New York, 1907, pp. 57–60) assigns the story given above to an earlier date, immediately after Poe's leaving West Point; but it seems more likely that the two are companion tales of Poe's first visit home, the only time when Mrs. Allan had any conversation with him.

for these statements relative to money, that Mr. Allan supported Poe, and that Poe still expected Mr. Allan to make some provision for him by will.

Such was the apparent life, known to his associates, that Poe led during the first two years of his residence in Baltimore. His true life was in his Aladdin's garret, even if there he also waved his handkerchief to his unknown neighbor across the street. All that really matters is that he there discovered his genius for the prose tale, both imaginative and satirical. Baltimore was not the most promising field for a young poet to seek his fortune in; less than four years before, Pinkney, who had resided there since childhood, had died at the age of twenty-five from the effects of poverty and discouragement suffered just as his genius was breaking forth. At the present time there were two literary sets in the city, of which Kennedy and his friends at the club constituted one, and a half-dozen obscure young men — Arthur, Carpenter, MacJilton, Brooks, Hewitt, and Dawes, whose names were current in the literature of the day and will occur in this narrative — made up the other; but to the former Poe was a stranger, and to the latter he was only slightly known as a youthful pretender to the

[*Facsimile of original MS.*
By courtesy of Mrs. W. M. Griswold]

THE FOLIO CLUB

There is a Machiavelian plot
Though every nare offact it not
Butler

THE Folio Club is, I am sorry to say, a mere Junto of Dunderheadism. I think too the members are quite as ill-looking as they are stupid. I also believe it their settled intention to abolish Literature, subvert the Press, and overturn the Government of Nouns and Pronouns. Th ie are my private opinions which I now take the liberty of making public.

Yet when, about a week ago, I first became one of this diabolical association, no person could have entertained for it m re profound sentiments of admiration and respect. Why my feelings in this matter have undergone a change will appear, very obviously, in the sequel. In the meantime I shall vindicate my own character, and the

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ciates the stories proved so agreeable a diversion over the wine and cigars that the first prize was immediately awarded to its author. Among the poems, too, one entitled "The Coliseum" was regarded as the best, but being in the same hand as the successful tales was ruled out, and the second prize awarded to Hewitt, the reviewer of Poe's "Al Aaraaf" four years before. On October 12 these decisions were announced in the "Saturday Visiter"; one of the tales, "MS. Found in a Bottle," was published as the prize story, and the name of its author given as Edgar Allan Poe.

To that young man, notwithstanding the allowance from Mr. Allan, the hard cash as well as the encouragement and the flattering card of the judges, advising the author to print all his tales in a book, must have been very welcome; but of much more importance was the association with Mr. Kennedy that then began. The publisher is said to have called, the next day after the announcement of the award, upon that kind-hearted gentleman who all his life was seeking out and advancing merit, and to have given him such an account of the author of the tale as to excite his curiosity and sympathy and cause him to request that Poe should be brought to his

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By courtesy of Mrs. W. M. Griswold]

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gestion. The immediate fruit of his general advice and patronage was the issue of "The Visionary," one of the series offered for the prize, in "Godey's Lady's Book" for January, 1834; but this may have been independent of the special offer to Carey & Lea. Whether earlier or later than this precise date, Poe went to Philadelphia, and personally arranged with Carey & Lea for the publication of the six tales of the "Folio Club" at least, and probably such others as he had completed.

It may well have been this sudden brightening of his fortunes, between his winning the prize, Mr. Kennedy's patronage, the acceptance of his tale by a magazine, and the prospect of a book, together with some report of Mr. Allan's illness, which led him to venture on a visit to his old home and an attempt at reconciliation. His hopes, whatever they were, came to naught. He went to Richmond, and called at the house; on being told by Mrs. Allan, who did not recognize him, that the physicians had forbidden her husband to see any one, he thrust her aside and walked rapidly to Mr. Allan's chamber; on his entrance Mr. Allan raised the cane which he used to walk with, and, threatening to strike him if he came within his reach, ordered him out, a com-

mand that Poe without a word at once obeyed.[1] This was the so-called violent scene in which the two parted. It is also related that the reason for Mr. Allan's hard action was that Poe had forged his name.[2] Poe's own description of the rupture

[1] "Edgar Allan Poe." Colonel Thomas H. Ellis to the *Richmond Standard*, April 22, 1881. Mr. Ellis, being the son of Mr. Allan's partner, and not much younger than Poe, had excellent means of judging the truth in this matter; but his statement is discredited by Mrs. Weiss, p. 73.

[2] *The Virginia Poe*, i, 112, 113. The story of Poe's relations with the Allan family here ends. In my former biography of Poe I ignored the graver charges of misconduct, because of the lack of any documentary evidence, and in the belief that the evidence, such as it may be, might not be brought forth. The charges are now revived and continue current. They all proceed from the Allan family, as heretofore. Mrs. Allan was a lady of social distinction in Virginia, a *grande dame;* and the sons of the family were brave and honorable men. The story which was current in Richmond from this source was referred to, but suppressed, in the *Southern Literary Messenger* (by J. R. Thompson), March, 1850, in words which indicate blackness, but a rumor of forgery has long been orally known, and once came to the surface in a libel suit, Poe *vs.* English, in New York, which will be dealt with later. It is useless to speculate whether it was another version of Poe's alleged conduct in appropriating the money meant to pay his substitute in the army or connected with that incident, or was a separate offense, or whether the offense was forgery at all. Such evidence as exists with regard to Poe's relations with the Allan family is contained in his letters to them, principally covering his University career, originally given to the family of the first Mrs. Allan,

in general was that, led by a chivalrous feeling, he "deliberately threw away a large fortune rather than endure a trivial wrong,"—a phrase plainly referring to the action of Mrs. Allan in taking possession of his old room in the house. Mr. Allan died on March 27, 1834, of the dropsy, leaving three children. Poe was not named in the will.

He returned to Baltimore to follow the literary career as best he could, but he was perhaps less welcome than formerly at the "Visiter," where he had published his poem "The Coliseum" and probably other matter, since Wilmer had been crowded out of his place by Hewitt and had left the city on foot and in want to seek his living in other quarters. Poe sent him a prospectus of a

and now deposited by them in the Valentine Museum at Richmond. I remember with great pleasure an evening spent with their custodian in 1884; but as he did not offer to show the letters, I did not ask for them, believing that he had good reason for declining to enter unnecessarily into so vexed a matter. He confined his information to saying that my knowledge of Poe's military career was correct. I have no further knowledge of the contents of the letters, which I have never sought to see and which have been very carefully guarded, except of the slightest derived from a Richmond correspondent at my request in respect to a small detail. To this rupture and its cause may be referred, provisionally, the statement of Poe's inamorata that "Mrs. Clemm also spoke vaguely of some family mystery, of some disgrace."

new magazine to be edited by them jointly in Baltimore. When fall came, his fortunes were at their lowest ebb; and, not finding the Philadelphia house forward in publishing his book, he applied to Mr. Kennedy for his intervention, and made known his real situation for the first time: —

BALTO., Nov., 1834.

D^r SIR, — I have a favor to beg of you which I thought it better to ask in writing, because, sincerely, I had not courage to ask it in person. I am indeed too well aware that I have no claim whatever to your attention, and that even the manner of my introduction to your notice was, at the best equivocal. Since the day you first saw me my situation in life has altered materially. At that time I looked forward to the inheritance of a large fortune, and, in the meantime, was in receipt of an annuity sufficient for my support. This was allowed me by a gentleman of Virginia (Mr. Jno. Allan) who adopted me at the age of two years (both my parents being dead) and who, until lately always treated me with the affection of a father. But a second marriage on his part, and I dare say many follies on my own at length ended in a quarrel between us. He is now dead, and has left me nothing. I am thrown

entirely upon my own resources with no profession, and very few friends. Worse than all this, I am at length penniless. Indeed no circumstances less urgent would have induced me to risk your friendship by troubling you with my distresses. But I could not help thinking that if my situation was stated — as you could state it — to Carey & Lea, they might be led to aid me with a small sum in consideration of my MS. now in their hands. This would relieve my immediate wants, and I could then look forward more confidently to better days. At all events receive the assurance of my gratitude for what you have already done. Most respy, yr obt st,

EDGAR ALLAN POE.[1]

Kennedy replied after an interval and in answer to a second inquiry, but he had at once interested himself in the matter.

BALTIMORE, December 22, 1834.

DEAR SIR, — I have received your note, and should sooner have apprised you of what I had done, but that Carey's letter only reached me a few days ago as I was stepping into a carriage to go to Annapolis, whence I returned only a day or two since.

[1] Kennedy MSS.

I requested Carey immediately upon the receipt of your first letter to do something for you as speedily as he might find an opportunity, and to make some advance on your book. His answer let me know that he would go on to publish, but the expectation of any profit from the undertaking he considered doubtful — not from want of merit in the production, but because small books of detached tales, however well written, seldom yield a sum sufficient to enable the bookseller to purchase a copyright. He recommended, however, that I should allow him to sell some of the tales to the publishers of the annuals. My reply was that I thought you would not object to this if the right to publish the same tale was reserved for the volume. He has accordingly sold one of the tales to Miss Leslie for the "Souvenir," at a dollar a page, I think with the reservation above mentioned — and has remitted me a draft for fifteen dollars which I will hand over to you as soon as you call upon me, which I hope you will do as soon as you can make it convenient. If the other tales can be sold in the same way, you will get more for the work than by an exclusive publication.

Yours truly, JOHN P. KENNEDY.[1]

[1] Griswold MSS.

Three months later Poe again applied to him: —

Sunday, 15th March [1835].

Dr Sir, — In the paper which will be handed you with this note is an advertisement to which I most anxiously solicit your attention. It relates to the appointment of a teacher in a Public School, and I have marked it with a cross so that you may readily perceive it. In my present circumstances such a situation would be most desirable, and if your interest could obtain it for me I would always remember your kindness with the deepest gratitude. Have I any hope? Your reply to this would greatly oblige. The 18th is fixed on for the decision of the commissioners, and the advertisement has only this moment caught my eye. This will excuse my obtruding the matter on your attention to-day.

Very respy, E. A. Poe.[1]

Mr. Kennedy, in reply, asked him to dinner on the same day, and received the well-known answer: —

Dr Sir, — Your kind invitation to dinner to-day has wounded me to the quick. I cannot come — and for reasons of the most humiliating

[1] Kennedy MSS.

nature in my personal appearance. You may conceive my deep mortification in making this disclosure to you — but it was necessary. If you will be my friend so far as to loan me $20, I will call on you to-morrow — otherwise it will be impossible, and I must submit to my fate.

Sincerely yours,

E. A. Poe.[1]

Sunday, 15th [1835].

It was this disclosure that roused Kennedy's acute sympathy and drew from him the personal attention to which he refers in his diary: —

"It is many years ago, I think, perhaps as early as 1833 or '34, that I found him in Baltimore in a state of starvation. I gave him clothing, free access to my table, and the use of a horse for exercise whenever he chose; in fact, brought him up from the very verge of despair."[2]

At no earlier time could Poe be properly so described, and it is plain from the correspondence that Mr. Kennedy had not realized the seriousness of Poe's condition, else he would sooner have helped him. Up to this time he had

[1] Kennedy MSS. This letter has hitherto been mistakenly ascribed to 1833, but reference to the almanac easily corrects the error.

[2] *Ibid.*

been a kind elder adviser in literary ways, desirous to assist him in obtaining an opening in literature; but from now he was a personal friend. Poe always remembered this and later services with gratitude, and acknowledged them years afterwards when he said: "Mr. Kennedy has been, at all times, a true friend to me — he was the first true friend I ever had — I am indebted to him for *life itself*." [1]

In this very month Poe's literary fortunes were already brightening. Upon Kennedy's recommendation, he had sent some tales to the "Southern Literary Messenger," still in the first year of its existence under the advisory and unpaid conduct of Mr. James Heath. Mr. T. W. White, the editor, was attracted by his new contributor's talents, and in the current number for March had published one of the stories, "Berenice," with a very flattering notice; at the same time he addressed a letter of inquiry to Mr. Kennedy, which elicited the following response: —

BALTIMORE, April 13, 1835.

DEAR SIR, — Poe did right in referring to me. He is very clever with his pen — classical and scholar-like. He wants experience and direction,

[1] Poe to Thomas, Stoddard, xcv.

but I have no doubt he can be made very useful to you. And, poor fellow! he is *very* poor. I told him to write something for every number of your magazine, and that you might find it to your advantage to give him some permanent employ. He has a volume of very bizarre tales in the hands of Carey & Lea, in Philadelphia, who for a year past have been promising to publish them. This young fellow is highly imaginative, and a little given to the *terrific*. He is at work upon a tragedy, but I have turned him to drudging upon whatever may make money, and I have no doubt you and he will find your account in each other.[1]

"Berenice" was followed by a tale in each number and some criticism. On the 30th of May Poe wrote to Mr. White, thanking him for his kindness: —

BALTIMORE, May 30, 1835.

MR. T. W. WHITE:

Dear Sir, — I duly rec^d through Mr. Kennedy your favour of the 20th enclosing $5: and an order for $4.94. I assure you it was very welcome. Miscarriages of double letters are by no means unfrequent just now, but yours, at least,

[1] Griswold MSS.

came safely to hand. Had I reflected a moment, I should have acknowledged the rec[t] before. I suppose you have heard about Wm. Gwynn Jones of this place, late editor of the "Gazette." He was detected in purloining letters from the office, to which the clerks were in the habit of admitting him familiarly. He acknowledged the theft of more than $2000 in this way at different times. He probably took even more than that, and I am quite sure that on the part of the clerks themselves advantage was taken of his arrest to embezzle double that sum. I have been a loser myself to a small amount.

I have not seen Mr. Kennedy for some days, having been too unwell to go abroad. When I saw him last he assured me his book would reach Richmond in time for your next number, and under this assurance I thought it useless to make such extracts from the book as I wished — thinking you could please yourself in this matter. I cannot imagine what delays its publication, for it has been some time ready for issue.

In regard to my critique [of Mr. Kennedy's novel] I seriously feel ashamed of what I have written. I fully intended to have given the work a thorough review, and examine it in detail. Ill health alone prevented me from so doing. At the

time I made the hasty sketch I sent you I was so ill as to be hardly able to see the paper on which I wrote, and finished it in a state of complete exhaustion. I have not, therefore, done anything like justice to the book, and I am vexed about the matter, for Mr. Kennedy has proved himself a kind friend to me in every respect, and I am sincerely grateful to him for many acts of generosity and attention.

I read the article in the "Compiler" relating to the "Confessions of a Poet," but there is no necessity of giving it a reply. The book is silly enough of itself, without the aid of any controversy concerning it. In your private ear, however, I may say a word or two. The writer "I" founds his opinion that I have not read the book simply upon one fact — that I disagree with him concerning it. I have looked over his article two or three times attentively, and can see no other reason adduced by him. If this is a good reason one way, it is equally good another — ergo — *he* has not read the book because he disagrees with me. Neither of us having read it then, it is better to say no more about it.

But seriously I *have* read it from beginning to end, and was very much amused at it. My opinion concerning it is pretty much the opinion of

the press at large. I have heard no person offer one serious word in its defense.

My notice of your "Messenger" in the "Republican" was, I am afraid, too brief for your views. But I could command no greater space in its editorial columns. I have often wondered at your preferring to insert such notices in the "Republican." It is a paper by no means in the hands of the first people here. Would not the "American" suit as well? Its columns are equally at your service. Did you notice the alteration I made in the name of the authority of the lines to Mr. Wilde? They were written by Mrs. Dr. Buckler of this city — not Buckley. You ask me if I am perfectly satisfied with your course. I reply that I am — entirely. My poor services are not worth what you give me for them.

The high compliment of Judge Tucker is rendered doubly flattering to me by my knowledge of his literary character.

Very sincerely yours,

EDGAR A. POE.[1]

Poe here displays so intelligent and vivid an interest in the magazine and such attention —

[1] Griswold MSS.

qualities that continued to be shown — that it is quite natural to find the correspondence issue in a proposal to draw him to Richmond as an assistant, especially as Mr. Heath had relinquished his free services and had been followed by an unnamed editor whose tenure of office was of the briefest. The letters that follow continue the detailed story of his connection with the magazine: —

BALTIMORE, June 12, 1835.

MR. T. W. WHITE:

My dear Sir, — I take the opportunity of sending this MS. by private hand. Your letter of June 8th I rec[d] yesterday morning, together with the magazines. In reply to your kind enquiries after my health, I am glad to say that I have entirely recovered — although Dr. Buckler, no longer than 3 weeks ago, assured me that nothing but a sea voyage would save me. I will do my best to please you in relation to Marshall's "Washington" if you will send it on. By what time would you wish the MS. of the Review?

I suppose you have received Mr. Calvert's communication. He will prove a valuable correspondent. I will send you on the "American" & "Republican" as soon as the *critiques* come out. What I can do farther to aid the circulation

of your magazine I will gladly do — but I must insist on your not sending me any remuneration for services of this nature. They are a pleasure to me, and no trouble whatever.

Very sincerely,

EDGAR A. POE.

I congratulate you upon obtaining the services of Mr. S. He has a high reputation for talent.[1]

BALTIMORE, June 22, 1835.

MY DEAR SIR, — I rec^d your letter of the 18th yesterday, and this morning your reprint of the "Messenger" No. 3. While I entirely agree with you and with many of your correspondents in your opinion of this number (it being in fact one of the very best issued), I cannot help entertaining a doubt whether it would be of any advantage to you to have the public attention called to this its second appearance by any detailed notice in the papers. There would be an air of irregularity about it — as the first edition was issued so long ago — which might even have a prejudicial effect. For indeed the veriest trifles — the mere semblance of anything unusual or *outré* — will frequently have a pernicious influence in cases similar to this; and you must be aware that of

[1] Griswold MSS.

all the delicate things in the world the character of a young Periodical is the most easily injured. Besides, it is undeniable that the public will not think of judging you by the appearance, or the merit, of your Magazine in November. Its *present* character, whether that be good or bad, is all that will influence them. I would therefore look zealously to the future, letting the past take care of itself. Adopting this view of the case, I thought it best to delay doing anything until I should hear further from you — being fully assured that a little reflection will enable you to see the matter in the same light as myself. One important objection to what you proposed is the insuperable dislike entertained by the Daily Editors to notice any but the most recent publications. And although I dare say that I could, if you insist upon it, overcome the aversion in the present case, still it would be trifling to no purpose with your interest in that quarter. If, however, you disagree with me in these opinions, I will undoubtedly (upon hearing from you) do as you desire. Of course the remarks I now make will equally apply to any other of the back numbers.

Many of the contributors to No. 3 are familiarly known to me — most of them I have seen occasionally. Charles B. Shaw, the author of the

"Alleghany Levels" [?] is an old acquaintance, and a most estimable and talented man. I cannot say with truth that I had any knowledge of your son. I read the Lines to his memory in No. 9 and was much struck with an air of tenderness and unaffected simplicity which pervades them. The verses immediately following, and from the same pen, gave evidence of fine poetic feeling in the writer. I will pay especial attention to what you suggested in relation to the punctuation &c. of my future MSS.

You ask me if I would be willing to come on to Richmond if you should have occasion for my services during the coming winter. I reply that nothing would give me greater pleasure. I have been desirous for some time past of paying a visit to Richmond, and would be glad of any reasonable excuse for so doing. Indeed I am anxious to settle myself in that city, and if, by any chance, you hear of a situation likely to suit me, I would gladly accept it, were the salary even the merest trifle. I should, indeed, feel myself greatly indebted to you if through your means I could accomplish this object. What you say in the conclusion of your letter, in relation to the supervision of proof-sheets, gives me reason to hope that possibly you might find something

for me to do in your office. If so, I should be very glad — for at present only a very small portion of my time is employed.

Immediately after putting my last letter to you in the P. O. I called upon Mr. Wood as you desired — but the Magazine was then completed.

Very sincerely yours,

EDGAR A. POE.

I have heard it suggested that a lighter-faced type in the headings of your various articles would improve the appearance of the "Messenger." Do you not think so likewise? Who is the author of the "Doom"?[1]

BALTIMORE, July 20, 1835.

MY DEAR SIR, — I duly rec^d both your letters (July 14th and 16th), together with the $20. I am indeed grieved to hear that your health has not been improved by your trip. I agree with you in thinking that too close attention to business has been instrumental in causing your sickness.

I saw the "Martinsburg Gazette" by accident at Mr. Kennedy's — but he is now out of town and will not be back till the fall, and I know not where to procure a copy of the paper. It merely spoke of the "Messenger" in general terms of

[1] Griswold MSS.

commendation. Have you seen the "Young Men's Paper" — and the N. Y. "Evening Star"? As might be supposed, I am highly gratified with Mr. Pleasant's notice, and especially with Paulding's. What Mr. Pleasant says in relation to the commencement of "Hans Phaal" is judicious. That part of the Tale is faulty indeed — so much so that I had often thought of remodeling it entirely. I will take care and have the Letter inserted in all the Baltimore papers.

Herewith I send you a "Baltimore Visiter" of October 12th, 1833. It contains a highly complimentary letter from Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Latrobe, and Dr. Miller, of Baltimore, in relation to myself. The "Tales of the Folio Club" have only been partially published as yet. "Lionizing" was one of them. If you could in any manner contrive to have this letter copied into any of the Richmond Papers it would greatly advance a particular object which I have in view. If you could find an excuse for printing it in the "Messenger," it would be still better. You might observe that as many contradictory opinions had been formed in relation to my Tales, and especially to "Lionizing," you took the liberty of copying the Letter of the Baltimore Committee.

One fact I would wish particularly noticed. The "Visiter" offered two Premiums — one for the best Tale & one for the best Poem — *both* of which were awarded to me. The award was, however, altered, and the Premium for Poetry awarded to the second best, in consideration of my having obtained the higher prize. This Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Latrobe told me themselves. I know you will do me this favor if you can — the manner of doing it I leave altogether to yourself.

I have taken much pains to procure you the Ink. Only one person in Baltimore had it — and he not for sale. As a great favor I obtained a pound at the price of $1.50. It is mixed with Linseed oil prepared after a particular fashion, which renders it expensive. I shall go down to the Steamboat as soon as I finish this letter, and if I get an opportunity of sending it I will do so.

It gives me the greatest pain to hear that my Review will not appear in No 11. I cannot imagine what circumstances you allude to as preventing you from publishing. The Death of the Chief Justice, so far from rendering the Review useless, is the very thing to attract public notice to the Article. I really wish you would consider

this matter more maturely, and if *possible* insert it in No. 11. Look over "Hans Phaal" and the Literary Notices by me in No. 10, and see if you have not miscalculated the sum due me. There are thirty-four columns in all. "Hans Phaal" cost me nearly a fortnight's hard labour, and was written especially for the "Messenger." I will not, however, sin so egregiously again in sending you a long article. I will confine myself to three or four pages.

Very sincerely yours,

EDGAR A. POE.[1]

In these letters is the earliest mention of ill health in Poe; but from this time he was subject to attacks of nervous exhaustion. He had been a rugged boy, well exercised and well fed, and as a youth in the army he was in good condition and training. While he was away from home and under no effective restraint, at the University and at West Point especially, he had shared the habits of his companions and drunk, sometimes heavily for a youth of his years, but generally not more than the others; indeed, at college he seems to have drunk less. There is no proof, notwithstanding wild tales of his fellow cadets,

[1] Griswold MSS.

that he showed any dangerous or even injurious taste for liquor, even at West Point, where he was an older and harder youth than his mates; and under the eye of Mrs. Clemm, in Baltimore, he was habitually abstemious, with such occasional indulgence at most as left no immediate serious effect. While living with Mrs. Clemm, doubtless, he had been less well nourished than in his growing years, and while his diet was, perhaps, sufficient, it could not have been generous, nor such as a youth in the flush of nervous and intellectual life should have; but no sign of actual want appears until after Mr. Allan's death, when Kennedy describes him as "in a state of starvation." He was then penniless; he was solitary, proud, and despairing. Hereditary weakness was in his constitution; there was a blight in the family, — father and mother had died early in life, his brother developed youthful dissipation and was already dead, his sister at the end of her childhood without any apparent cause had failed inwardly, and, though she lived long, remained mentally in a state of arrested development. A constitution such as this family history indicates, however reinforced by a well-nurtured boyhood and hardy outdoor life, must have been tried by bodily privation and mental strain, even

if Poe had led a life less intellectual and less nervously exhausting, to say nothing of such influences as his youthful use of liquor may have had. He had reached the years when, in such a nature after such a career, a nervous crisis was due. The first intellectual weariness was upon him, and with it want, despondency, and stimulants in lieu of rest, happiness, and food. Mr. Kennedy was his only effectual support, his stay, — a kind and invigorating friend, who, as will appear, plainly regarded his state of mind and body as one that could be cured by food, exercise, and cheerful company, by encouragement and success. The question of Poe's physique is fundamental in his biography; he had begun normal, healthy, and well; at twenty-five he was no longer so, nor was he ever to regain sound health. A change, however induced, had declared itself, and henceforth he suffered, at longer or shorter intervals, from prostration.

Under such conditions as have now been fully described, Poe had written all of his earlier tales;[1] the first creative impulse was exhausted,

[1] Seven tales — *MS. Found in a Bottle*, *Berenice*, *Morella*, *Lionizing*, *Hans Pfaall*, *The Assignation* (*The Visionary*), and *Bon-Bon* — had been published; three — *Shadow*, *Loss of Breath*, *King Pest* — were published in the first number of the *Messenger* after his arrival in Richmond; four — *Metzen-*

and his imaginative genius slept. These stand in a group by themselves as the first fruits of Poe's genius. In conception and execution they afford types of his later works in both the arabesque and grotesque manner, as he afterwards happily named the two extremes of his style, and without requiring too close a scrutiny they illustrate the early development of his mind and art. Though there is no sign that he had written romance before this time, the germ of his genius for prose fiction had shown itself in his university days, when he was celebrated among his mates for his powers in extemporaneous tale-telling.[1] It is easy

gerstein, Duc de L'Omelette, Four Beasts in One (*Epimanes*), *A Tale of Jerusalem* — were published also in the *Messenger* early in 1836, of which one, *Epimanes*, was in the hands of Carey & Lea in 1835, as was also *Silence* (*Siope*), published later in an annual in the fall of 1838. It is stated in the magazine, August, 1835, that Poe expected to publish *The Tales of the Folio Club* in the fall of 1835, and the number of these is there said to be sixteen; he had contributed to the magazine all it would hold by September of that year; it is fairly to be inferred that the three, previously unknown, published in the magazine, 1836, were left over from the collection, and that it consisted entire of the above titles. The sixteenth tale is missing, and was missing in the MSS. returned to Poe by Carey & Lea; it has been identified as *A Descent into the Maelström* (*The Virginia Poe*, i, 105), but this is doubtful. Cf. note Appendix C. The tales were much revised in later issues.

[1] The best illustration of this, though imaginary, is *The*

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to see that Bulwer and Disraeli, the popular writers of the time, had given direction to his genius both in subject and style; and, in the arabesque tales, the contemporary interest in German romance, then specially noticeable in the English reviews, shows distinctly as a moulding element in his intellectual environment. Only five of the tales are purely imaginative, and of these "Berenice" is the most varied and comprehensive: in it Poe's hero first comes upon the stage, a man struck with some secret disease, given to the use of drugs and to musing over old books in an antiquated and gloomy chamber, and reserved for a horrible experience. In it, too, are such themes of evil fascination for his mind as the epileptic patient and the premature burial; such marks of his handling as the cousinship of the principal actors, the description of morbid physical changes, the minute analysis of sensations, the half-superstitious reference to metempsychosis, and the vivid analysis of the effects of drugs; and such traits of literary style as the

Valley of Unrest, A Book Without a Woman, An Old Oddity Paper, edited by Douglass Sherley. John P. Morton & Co., Louisville, Ky., 1884. This is one of the most curious and interesting pieces of *Poeana*, youthfully written but well done, and reflecting especially the atmosphere of Southern youth at the University as it remains now in tradition.

absence of conversation, the theatrically elaborated scene of the action, the speed of the narrative with its sudden and yet carefully prepared catastrophe. "Berenice" reveals a mind at once analytical and constructive, in which the imagination is the dominant faculty and a taste for sensuous effects, melodramatic incidents, and fantastic suggestions is the most shaping influence. Defective as the tale is in refinement, — Poe never but once indulged again in a *dénouement* of such mere physical horror, — it exhibits, in however crude a form, the capacity to conceive startling imaginative effects and to select the right means to bring them about directly, forcibly, and without observation; in a word, artistic power. In the Venetian story of "The Visionary," now known as "The Assignation," there is more of splendid coloring, of the purely spectacular and decorative element; in the Hungarian myth of "Metzengerstein" there is a more violent and raw superstition; in "Morella" — the history of the revolting victory of that aspiring will, by which the dying mother's spirit, passing into her new-born babe, retained in that childish frame the full intelligence and ripe passions of womanhood — there is a solemn and breathless dread beneath the coming of a

vague but sure terror: and these several traits individualize the three tales, but in none of them is there the finely wrought complexity of "Berenice." All yield, however, in comparison with the fifth and last of the early arabesque series, the parable called "Shadow," which, within its narrow limits of a page or two, is at once the most noble and most artistic expression of Poe's imagination during the first period of his career, and furthermore is alone distinguished by the even flow and delicacy of transition that belong to his best prose style. The elements in this rhapsody of gloom are simple and massive, the accessories in perfect keeping; the fine monotone of stifled and expectant emotion in the breasts of the Greek revelers in the lighted, sepulchral, plague-isolated hall is just sustained at its initial pitch until the one thrilling, solitary change arises in the emergence of the shadow from the black draperies of the chamber, and its motionless relief under the gloom of the seven iron lamps, against the burnished, brazen door, opposite to the feet of the young and shrouded Zoilus — as it were the semblance of a man, but "the shadow neither of man, nor of God, nor of any familiar thing," — the vague, formless One that was not indifferent to the low-voiced question of Oinos,

but spoke and told its dwelling-place and its appellation; "and then did we, the seven, start from our seats in horror, and stand trembling, and shuddering, and aghast, for the tones in the voice of the shadow were not the tones of any one being, but of a multitude of beings, and, varying in their cadences from syllable to syllable, fell duskily upon our ears in the well-remembered and familiar accents of many thousand departed friends."

Perhaps the "MS. Found in a Bottle," full as it is of fantasy and magnificent scenic effects of ocean views, should be placed among the tales of pure imagination; it stands slightly apart from them only because it has some relationship with those stories, partly of adventure, partly of science, which Poe built rather out of his acquired knowledge than his dreams. Of this class "Hans Pfaall," the narrative of a voyage to the moon, is the first complete type. The idea of such a passage from the earth to its nearest neighbor in space was not novel, nor was the astronomical information involved by any means abstruse, being furnished in fact by Herschel's popular treatise, then first published in America; but Poe claimed that the design of making a fiction plausible by the use of scientific facts and

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principles was original, and he certainly worked it out with great patience and skill, and even a high degree of scientific consistency. It is not without obligation to an obscure *deus ex machina*, a providence unknown to physics, which overruled the balloonist's fate; but, with all its whimsicalities, it exhibits for the first time the keenness and lucidity of Poe's intelligence as distinguished from his imagination, and proves that he then possessed a considerable power of applied thought. It is noteworthy, too, as the earliest of those attempts to gull the public, for which he afterwards became notorious. At the time it was less successful in this respect than the celebrated "Moon-Hoax" of Mr. Locke, published a few weeks later in the "New York Sun," which made fools of many highly intelligent citizens and caused Poe some chagrin, as he showed in his later comments upon it, because so many more people were taken in by it than by "Hans Pfaall," while he had put himself to so much more pains than Mr. Locke to seem truthful; certainly if verisimilitude were the gauge of the crowd's folly in credulity, he deserved better luck than his rival.

The remainder of the tales Poe would have

called grotesque; but he was not so pleasingly gifted with humor as with either imagination or intelligence. Some of them are the merest extravaganzas, such as the "Duc de L'Omelette," in which the devil poses as a gambler who can lose, or "Bon-Bon," in which he plays his part as a cannibal of human souls. Some are satirical, and among them is to be reckoned one of his weakest productions, "Loss of Breath, A Tale *à la* Blackwood," which in its first form, with its expanded narrative of the hanging and the burial alive, was more perceptibly aimed at the inane jargon (as it was then thought) of German metaphysics. In all of them, too, Poe is less original than in his other tales; he shows more plainly the traces of his reading. "King Pest" is very closely modeled on Vivian Grey's adventure in the castle of the Grand Duke of Johannisberger (the cabinet of the Prince of Little Lilliput in the same novel contains the double of the Saracen's horse in Metzengerstein's tapestry); and "Lionizing," a sketch which was repeatedly and elaborately corrected in later years, apart from its Shandean touch, copies in style and conception "Too Beautiful for Anything" in Bulwer's "The Ambitious Student in Ill Health, and other Papers," apparently a favorite book

of Poe's. "Epimanes" and "A Tale of Jerusalem," the flattest of the series, need hardly be mentioned.

The "Tales of the Folio Club," together with "Politian" and a scant half-dozen short poems, represent the results of Poe's life in Baltimore, the first four years of his literary career. He owed the opportunity for this uninterrupted period of preparation and experiment to Mr. Allan, however unwilling he was to own the debt or unable to recognize it; what would have happened to him without this aid, which secured his leisure, is shown by what did happen to him the moment it was withdrawn by Mr. Allan's death. He had justified his choice of a profession. He had succeeded by dint of genius, — intellectual curiosity, romantic imagination, satiric temper evolving themselves under a master talent for literary art. Culture, such as is bred in a university, had played but a small part. He had received a good education, but it had not proceeded far; he was a fair Latinist for his years, read French, and had the merest smattering of Greek, Spanish, and Italian, but he had read and loved books. Few books, however, could have come in his way; he was never near any considerable collection of them, in his army

life he was especially debarred from them, and no libraries of importance existed where he had lived. He read books of contemporary fame, especially such English books as were reprinted in Philadelphia, and magazines and newspapers, for which he always showed avidity; he had little familiarity at any time with literature earlier than Byron, and never showed love or devotion to great masters of the past. He had, in the narrowest sense, a contemporaneous mind, the instincts of the journalist, the magazine writer; and these became dominant in his career. The conditions of his life and his own tastes were preparing him for an editorial position. He belonged to the pioneer stage of our literature, and the emergence of his genius is to be judged by its environment, by what it was open for him to know and to do.

It has been maintained that Poe was misplaced in America, that he was a German born out of due longitude, a Hoffmann come into the world in a land of alien ways and spirit; and the spring of his peculiar genius is traced, specifically, to Hoffmann, with some obligation also to other German sources. The discussion of this view belongs to a later period in his life; but the fragment of the rejected preface to the "Tales of the Folio Club"

is thought to show that he had Hoffmann's "Serapions-brüder" in mind as his model, and the single tale of "The Visionary" owes its stage-setting to the "Doge und Dogaressa" of the same author. The date of the preface to the tales is unknown; but "The Visionary" was written before October, 1833. It is essential, therefore, to show Poe's contact with Hoffmann before that time. This contact could not have been direct, since Poe knew no German; it is as little likely to have been in French, the only translation at that time being of the date 1830, issued at Brussels,[1] and Poe's chances of encountering it being remote indeed. What he knew of Hoffmann, therefore, may safely be referred to magazine notices of that writer and other German romancers, with specimens. It is only necessary, at this point, to note the fact. Hoffmann was at most only one of many contemporary influences playing upon Poe's receptive and pliable genius, and the knowledge Poe had of him may have been of the slightest, as none was available except through Carlyle and Scott, who had brought him forward in 1827 in English reviews. It is, besides, an error to suppose that Poe's ro-

[1] *Contes Fantastiques de E. T. A. Hoffmann.* Bruxelles: Louis Hauman et compagnie. 1830. 4 tomes.

mantic tales were new in kind;[1] they were only finer in quality, and by the presence of genius and art; such tales were common in the magazines of the day, a contemporary fashion. It was not from any special attention to Hoffmann, but from the magazine world and its tastes, both English and American, that Poe's tales sprang, brooded over by a genius great in its own nativity, which from the beginning had more vitality of its own than it ever borrowed from others. It had run its first course in the young writer, and had exhausted him; and during the lull that follows such efforts he turned to new fields of the intellectual life. He was, too, for the first time, fortunate in his own right; he had earned his first appointment and held a place, however humble, in the world of men.

[1] Cf. *The Maniac's Story* (by Æ), *The History of a Hat* (by H), *The Duel* (Anon.), *The Prima Donna* (by *Mare Smeton*), respectively in *Godey's*, September, 1833, August, October, December, 1834, all of which were thought to be Poe's by the late W. M. Griswold, on internal evidence solely. Such tales, however, were numerous, and at that time Poe had every reason to sign his name. The liability to error in the attempt to identify early work is overwhelming, and has been amply illustrated in the case of Hawthorne at the same period.

CHAPTER V

THE YOUNG CRITIC

Poe left Baltimore in midsummer, apparently without regret, for he owed little gratitude to that city, nor did he ever return to it to live, although there he was destined to die and be buried. He went directly to Richmond, to the scene and associates of his boyhood, to the MacKenzies where his sister Rosalie still lived, and to other friends and houses of his past; nor did he doubt that, in spite of the changes in his lot, life there would be pleasant to him: he may have thought that his literary position would compensate for his loss of social pretension and the consideration that attaches to wealth, or even that his old acquaintance would be advantageous to him. Before his departure from Baltimore a plan had been made by which the family of which he had long been one should be kept together and have its home with him in new surroundings. He may have feared that separation would cast him back into that despondency from which he had lately arisen, though he had fallen into it when they

were by, and in making a new start he may have craved their encouragement and protection, in view of his own temptations and dangers. Virginia had idolized him from childhood, and Mrs. Clemm had no one else to look to for support. It was proposed to keep the family united by a marriage of Poe with his cousin, and it was so determined.

He entered at once on his duties as an assistant to Mr. White, in the office of the magazine — he was not nominally an editor until later — at a salary of ten dollars a week. It was not high pay, but the position he held was a good opening, and well adapted to his talents. He had been highly praised for his tales. Kennedy cheered and spurred him; Paulding had called him "decidedly the best of all our young writers," and added, "I might add all our old ones, with one or two exceptions"; and others, who were the literary autocrats of the day, paid their passing tribute. The Southern press welcomed him loudly, with here and there a word of protest, which represented one phase of public taste, against the "Germanism" of the early tales, by which he was becoming known. His fortunes, however regarded, were in bright contrast to his immediate past; but a few weeks after his arrival

all this was as naught. An obstruction arose in his engagement with his cousin, and he lost his place through intemperance. He had suffered, from whatever cause, a characteristic nervous breakdown.

The engagement between Edgar and his cousin Virginia had come to the ears of his relative, Neilson Poe, who, himself a third cousin to both, had recently married her half-sister, also his third cousin; and, led by his wife, who thought Virginia too young to marry (as indeed she was, having been born August 15, 1822,[1] and consequently hardly turned of thirteen years), he offered to Mrs. Clemm to take the child into his family and care for her until she should be eighteen, when, if she desired to marry Edgar, she would be free to do so. It does not appear what disposition was to be made of Mrs. Clemm. Poe, to whom the offer was communicated, wrote [2] to Mrs. Clemm, August 29, imploring her not to consent to separate him from Virginia, and appealing to her pity for himself in such terms that his sincerity

[1] The Records of St. Paul's Parish, Baltimore. The date August 13 has some authority by family tradition.

[2] The author has not seen this letter, but is assured by its custodians that such is its character.

cannot be questioned. Some days later he wrote to Mr. Kennedy as follows: —

RICHMOND, September 11, 1835.

DEAR SIR, — I received a letter yesterday from Dr. Miller, in which he tells me you are in town. I hasten, therefore, to write you — and express by letter what I have always found it impossible to express orally — my deep sense of gratitude for your frequent and effectual assistance and kindness. Through your influence Mr. White has been induced to employ me in assisting him with the Editorial duties of his Magazine at a salary of $520 per annum. The situation is agreeable to me for many reasons — but alas! it appears to me that nothing can now give me pleasure — or the slightest gratification. Excuse me, my dear Sir, if in this letter you find much incoherency. My feelings at this moment are pitiable indeed. I am suffering under a depression of spirits such as I have never felt before. I have struggled in vain against the influence of this melancholy — *You will believe* me, when I say that I am still miserable in spite of the great improvement in my circumstances. I say you will believe me, and for this simple reason, that a man who is writing for *effect* does not write

thus. My heart is open before you — if it be worth reading, read it. I am wretched, and know not why. Console me, — for you can. But let it be quickly — or it will be too late. Write me immediately. Convince me that it is worth one's while — that it is at all necessary to live, and you will prove yourself indeed my friend. Persuade me to do what is right. I do not mean this. I do not mean that you should consider what I now write you a jest — oh, pity me! for I feel that my words are incoherent — but I will recover myself. You will not fail to see that I am suffering under a depression of spirits which will ruin me should it be long continued. Write me then, and quickly. Urge me to do what is right. Your words will have more weight with me than the words of others — for you were my friend when no one else was. Fail not — as you value your peace of mind hereafter.

E. A. Poe.

Mr. White desires me to say that if you could send him any contribution for the "Messenger" it would serve him most effectually. I would consider it a personal favor if you could do so without incommoding yourself.

I will write you more fully hereafter. I see

"The Gift" [Miss Leslie's Annual for 1836] is out. They have published "The MS. found in a Bottle" (the prize tale you will remember), although I not only told Mr. Carey myself that it had been published, but wrote him to that effect after my return to Baltimore, and sent him another tale in place of it ("Epimanes"). I cannot understand why they have published it — or why they have *not* published either "Siope" ["Silence"] or "Epimanes" ["Four Beasts"].

Mr. White is willing to publish my Tales of the Folio Club — that is, to *print* them. Would you oblige me by ascertaining from Carey & Lea whether they would, in that case, appear nominally as the publishers, the books, when printed, being sent on to them, as in the case of [Kennedy's] "H[orse] S[hoe] Robinson"? Have you seen the [Locke's] "Discoveries in the Moon"? Do you not think it altogether suggested by "Hans Phaal"? It is very singular, but when I first purposed writing a Tale concerning the Moon, the idea of *Telescopic* discoveries suggested itself to me — but I afterwards abandoned it. I had, however, spoken of it freely, and from many little incidents and apparently trivial remarks in those *Discoveries*, I am

convinced that the idea was stolen from myself. Yours most sincerely,

EDGAR A. POE.[1]

To this painful letter Mr. Kennedy replied: —

BALTIMORE, September 19, 1835.

MY DEAR POE, — I am sorry to see you in such plight as your letter shows you in. It is strange that just at this time, when everybody is praising you, and when fortune is beginning to smile upon your hitherto wretched circumstances, you should be invaded by these villainous blue devils. It belongs, however, to your age and temper to be thus buffeted — but be assured, it only wants a little resolution to master the adversary forever. Rise early, live generously, and make cheerful acquaintances, and I have no doubt you will send these misgivings of the heart all to the Devil. You will doubtless do well henceforth in literature, and add to your *comforts*, as well as to your reputation, which it

[1] Kennedy MSS. The first part of this letter is curiously like the repentant epistles of Coleridge, and such continued to be Poe's style in similar circumstances; the contrast of the two parts also is a marked trait, and first reveals clearly what might seem a double personality in him, so characteristic was it, and in the end so glaring.

gives me great pleasure to assure you is everywhere rising in popular esteem.

Can't you write some farces after the manner of the French Vaudevilles? If you can (and I think you can), you may turn them to excellent account by selling them to the managers in New York. I wish you would give your thoughts to this suggestion. More than yourself have remarked the coincidence between "Hans Phaal" & the "Lunar Discoveries," and I perceive that in New York they are republishing "Hans" for the sake of comparison. Say to White that I am over head in business, and can promise never a line to living man. I wish he would send me the "Richmond Whig" containing the reply to the defense of Capt. Reed. Tell him so.

I will write to Carey & Lea to know if they will allow you to publish the "Tales of the Folio Club" in their name. Of course you will understand that if they do not print them they will not be required to be at the risk of the printing expenses. I suppose you mean that White shall take that risk upon himself, and look for his indemnity to the sale. My own opinion is that White could publish them as advantageously as Carey.

Write to me frequently, and believe me very truly yours, JOHN P. KENNEDY.[1]

It was, apparently, while this correspondence was going on that Poe lost his place, and he may not have received this last letter when he left Richmond and arrived at Baltimore. There he pleaded his suit in person, and on September 22 took out a license in that city for the marriage.[2] It has been said, on the authority of Mrs. Clemm's conversation taken down in shorthand, that the ceremony was performed by the Rev. John Johns, at Old Christ Church, and that the next day Poe returned to his duties.[3] If this was actually the case the matter was kept very private. There is no complete legal proof of the marriage; but this is not conclusive against its having taken place, as the marriage records of Old Christ Church were badly kept and are very

[1] Griswold MSS.

[2] Marriage Records of Baltimore City.

[3] Didier, p. 58. The date of marriage is given as September 2. As Mr. Didier knew nothing of the record of the marriage license granted September 22, the error is of a kind to support rather than to discredit the marriage. The license was the last issued that day, and it fails to prove the marriage only because there is no return of the minister officiating; but such a return was not obligatory, and there are several other entries in the records that are similarly incomplete.

defective. It is certain, however, that Poe so far succeeded in his entreaties that the proposal of Neilson Poe was rejected; it may never have been seriously considered.

Poe now wrote repentantly to Mr. White, but nothing more is known of this incident than is contained in this reply: —

RICHMOND, September 29, 1835.

DEAR EDGAR, — Would that it were in my power to unbosom myself to you in language such as I could on the present occasion wish myself master of. I cannot do it — and therefore must be content to speak to you in my plain way. That you are sincere in all your promises I firmly believe. But, Edgar, when you once again tread these streets, I have my fears that your resolve would fall through, and that you would again sip the juice, even till it stole away your senses. Rely on your own strength, and you are gone! Look to your Maker for help, and you are safe! How much I regretted parting with you is unknown to any one on this earth except myself. I was attached to you — and am still — and willingly would I say return, if I did not dread the hour of separation very shortly again.

If you could make yourself contented to take

up your quarters in my family or in any other private family where liquor is not used, I should think there were hopes of you. But if you go to a tavern, or to any other place where it is used at table, you are not safe. I speak from experience.

You have fine talents, Edgar — and you ought to have them respected as well as yourself. Learn to respect yourself, and you will very soon find that you are respected. Separate yourself from the bottle, and bottle-companions, forever! Tell me if you can and will do so, and let me hear that it is your fixed purpose never to yield to temptation. If you should come to Richmond again, and again should be an assistant in my office, it must be especially understood by us that all engagements on my part would be dissolved the moment you get drunk. No man is safe that drinks before breakfast. No man can do so and attend to business properly.

I have thought over the matter seriously about the autograph article, and have come to the conclusion that it will be best to omit it in its present dress. I should not be at all surprised, were I to send it out, to hear that Cooper had sued me for a libel. The form containing it has been ready for press three days — and I have been just as

many days deciding the question. I am your true friend, T. W. WHITE.[1]

Poe returned with Mrs. Clemm and Virginia, and the three boarded together at the same house. The publication of the magazine had been temporarily suspended, but after its reissue in December, instead of being known simply as an assistant, he had editorial charge; he was thus spurred to his utmost, in the company of his own, and surrounded by friends and good-wishers. The happier state of affairs was soon reflected in his correspondence with Kennedy:

RICHMOND, Jan. 22, 1836.

DEAR SIR, — Although I have never yet acknowledged the receipt of your kind letter of advice some months ago, it was not without great influence upon me. I have, since then, fought the enemy manfully, and am now, in every respect, comfortable and happy. I know you will be pleased to hear this. My health is better than for years past, my mind is fully occupied, my pecuniary difficulties have vanished, I have a fair prospect of future success — in a word all is right. I shall never forget to whom all this happiness is in great degree to be attributed. I

[1] Griswold MSS.

JOHN PENDLETON KENNEDY

know without your timely aid I should have sunk under my trials. Mr. White is very liberal, and besides my salary of $520 pays me liberally for extra work, so that I receive nearly $800. Next year, that is at the commencement of the second volume, I am to get $1000. Besides this I receive, from Publishers, nearly all new publications. My friends in Richmond have received me with open arms, and my reputation is extending — especially in the South. Contrast all this with those circumstances of absolute despair in which you found me, and you will see how great reason I have to be grateful to God — and to yourself.

Some matters in relation to the death of Mrs. Catherine Clemm, who resided at Mount Prospect, four miles from Baltimore, render it necessary for me to apply to an attorney, and I have thought it probable you would be kind enough to advise me . . . [the omitted passage refers to legal details]. Mrs. Clemm, the widow of William Clemm, Jr., is now residing under my protection at Richmond. She has two children who have an interest in this one fifth — one of them, Virginia, is living with her here — the other, Henry, is absent (at sea). . . . Mrs. Clemm wishes me (if possible) to be appointed the guardian of her

two children. Henry is seventeen and Virginia fifteen. . . . I should be glad to have your opinion in regard to my Editorial course in the "Messenger." How do you like my Critical Notices? I have understood (from the Preface to your Third Edition of "Horseshoe") that you are engaged in another work. If so, can you not send me on a copy in advance of the publication. Remember me to your family, and believe me with the highest respect and esteem,

Yours very truly, EDGAR A. POE.[1]

BALTIMORE, February 9, 1836.

MY DEAR POE, — . . . [The omitted passage refers to the Mrs. Caroline Clemm affair.] I am greatly rejoiced at your success not only in Richmond but everywhere. My predictions have been more than fulfilled in regard to the public favour for your literary enterprises. Let me beg you to set down this praise at its value. As nothing but an incentive to the utmost care and labour for improvement. You are strong enough now to be criticised. Your fault is your love of the extravagant. Pray beware of it. You find a hundred intense writers for one *natural* one. Some of your *bizarreries* have been mistaken for

[1] Kennedy MSS.

satire — and admired too in that character. *They* deserved it, but *you* did not, for you did not intend them so. I like your grotesque — it is of the very best stamp; and I am sure you will do wonders for yourself in the comic — I mean the *serio-tragicomic*. Do you easily keep pace with the demands of the magazine? Avoid, by all means, the appearance of flagging. I like the critical notices very well. By the by, I wish you would tell White that he never sent me the November number.

Your letter assures me that you have entirely conquered your late despondency. I am rejoiced at this. You have a pleasant and prosperous career before you, if you subdue this brooding and boding inclination of your mind. Be cheerful; rise early, work methodically — I mean at appointed hours. Take regular recreation every day. Frequent the best company only. Be rigidly temperate both in body and mind — and I will ensure you at a moderate premium all the success and comfort you want. Will you do me a piece of business? . . . [The omitted passage refers to the recovery of a portrait.] Yours truly,

JOHN P. KENNEDY.[1]

[1] Griswold MSS.

RICHMOND, February 11, 1836.

DEAR SIR, — I received your kind letter of the 9th about an hour ago. . . . [The omitted passage refers to the portrait mentioned.]

You are nearly, but not altogether right in relation to the satire of some of my Tales. Most of them were *intended* for half-banter, half-satire — although I might not have fully acknowledged this to be their aim even to myself. "Lionizing" and "Loss of Breath" were satires properly speaking, — at least so meant, — the one of the rage for Lions, and the facility of becoming one, the other of the extravagancies of "Blackwood." I find no difficulty in keeping pace with the demands of the magazine. In the February number, which is now in the binder's hands, are no less than 40 *pages* of Editorials — perhaps this is a little *de trop*. There was no November number. . . . Mr. W. has increased my salary since I wrote $104 for the present year. This is being liberal beyond my expectations. He is exceedingly kind in every respect. You did not reply to my query touching the "new work." But I do not mean to be inquisitive. . . . [An omitted postscript refers to Kennedy's seal.]

Most sincerely yours, EDGAR A. POE.[1]

[1] Kennedy MSS.

The next persons of literary reputation who together with Kennedy were now taking a friendly interest in Poe were Beverley Tucker, of Virginia, the author of "The Partizan Leader," and John K. Paulding of New York. Their interest was called out by Poe's work in the magazine. The letters of Tucker are long and leisurely, and are here abridged by the omission of the less personal passages in which the ways of publishers and the decay of taste are the prominent topics. Those of Paulding are more fully given, as the matter is of biographical interest. Other writers, especially Mrs. Sigourney, wrote to him in a similar strain.

Tucker made his approaches diplomatically through Mr. White: —

WILLIAMSBURG, November 29, 1835.

MY DEAR SIR, —. . . I am much flattered by Mr. Poe's opinion of my lines. . . . He will take this and other suggestions of mine kindly. I am interested in him, and am glad he has found a position in which his pursuit of fame may be neither retarded, nor, what is worse, hurried by necessity. His history, as I have heard it, reminds me of Coleridge's; with the example of Coleridge's virtues and success before him, he can need no other guide. Yet a companion by

the way to hint that "more haste makes less speed" may not be amiss. Will he admit me to this office? Without the tithe of his genius, I am old enough to be his father (if I do not mistake his filiation, I remember his beautiful mother when a girl), and I presume I have had advantages the want of which he feels. Now, if by aiding you, I can aid him too to disencumber himself of the clogs that have impeded his progress, I shall kill two birds with one stone. Let me tell you then why in the critique I prepared for Green, I said nothing of his Tale. ["MS. Found in a Bottle."] It was because I thought that had been already praised as much as was good for him. And why? Because I am sure no man ever attained to that distinction to which Mr. P. may fairly aspire *by extravagance*. He is made for better things than to cater for the depraved taste of the literary vulgar, the most disgusting and impertinent of all vulgarians. Besides, I was disappointed in the tale; not because of the praises I had heard (for I make light of such things), but because Mr. P. had taught me to expect from him something more than the mere *physique* of the horrible. I had expected that the author of "Morella" on board the Flying Dutchman would have found a Dutch tongue in his head, would have thawed

the silence of his shipmates, and have extracted from them a tale of thrilling interest, of the causes of that awful spell which has driven and still drives their ship careering safely through the innumerable horrors he has described. Cannot he rescue her yet from her perils, and send us another bottle full of intelligence of her escape, and of her former history? Cannot he, by way of episode, get himself sent on board of some fated ship, with letters from the spellbound mariners to their friends at home? Imaginations of this sort flocked to my mind as soon as I found him on her decks, and hence I was disappointed. I do not propose that he should work up these materials. He can do better in following the lead of his own fancy. But let him remember that fancy must be servant, not mistress. It must be made the minister of higher faculties. . . .

Now one word more. If Mr. P. takes well what I have said, he shall have as much more of it whenever occasion calls for it. If not, his silence alone will effectually rebuke my impertinence.

Yours truly, B. T.[1]

Poe wrote to him at once, and received a long

[1] Griswold MSS.

and friendly reply, of which the first paragraph sufficiently indicates the spirit: —

WILLIAMSBURG, December 5, 1835.

DEAR SIR, — Your letter has just been received, and deserves my thanks. So far from needing apology, it has been taken as a favour, and I have been congratulating myself on the success of my attempt to draw you into correspondence. It is more creditable to your candour than to my criticism that you have taken it so kindly. . . .

Respectfully, and with the best wishes,

Your obedient servant,

[Signature torn off.][1]

Some of Tucker's criticisms, however, were thought by Poe capable of doing him harm with his employer, and in consequence Tucker again wrote to White: —

WILLIAMSBURG, January 26, 1836.

MY DEAR SIR, — . . . Last night I received a letter from Mr. P. by which I learn that you may not feel as much confidence in his capacity for the duties of his station as is necessary for your mutual comfort. This doubt he attributes

[1] Griswold MSS.

in part to what must have been a misconstruction by you of one of my letters. That I have not admired all Mr. P.'s productions, as much as some others, and that his writings are not so much to my taste as they would be were I (as would to God I were) as young as he, I do not deny. Thus much I expressed, and this so freely as to show that, had I meant more, I would have said more. You only know me on paper, but I think you can read this point in my character at the distance of sixty miles. I was equally sincere, I assure you, in what I said in his praise. . . . I do not agree with the reading (or rather the writing and printing) public in admiring Mrs. Sigourney & Co., or any of our native poets except Halleck. In this I know I shall stand condemned. But I appeal from contemporaneous and reciprocal puffing to the impartial judgment of posterity. Let that pass. I only mention this to say that Mr. P.'s review of the writings of a leash of these ladies, in your last number, is a specimen of criticism, which for niceness of discrimination, delicacy of expression, and all that shows familiarity with the art, may well compare with any I have ever seen. . . .

Mr. P. is young, and I thought him rash. I expressed this full as strongly as I thought it.

I now repeat it, and apply to him the caution given by the God of Poets and Critics to his son when he permitted him to guide the Chariot that lights the world.

"Parce, puer, stimulis, et fortiter utere loris." . . . I write this letter at his request. . . .

[Signature torn off.][1]

Paulding, the second new correspondent, was a leading literary light of New York, whose early praise of Poe has already been noticed.

It was natural, therefore, to turn to him with a suggestion that he should become the intermediary to present to the Harpers in New York the "Tales of the Folio Club," still unpublished by Carey & Lea, with the hope of their issue in that city. Poe at the same time received back from Carey & Lea the manuscripts, of which one tale, not then recovered, was missing. Paulding reported the ill success of his mission to White: —

NEW YORK, March 3, 1836.

DEAR SIR, — I duly received the Book containing the Tales by Mr. Poe heretofore published in the "Messenger," and have delayed writing to you on the subject until I could communicate the final decision of the Messrs. Har-

[1] Griswold MSS.

pers as to their republication. By the way, you are entirely mistaken in your idea of my influence over these gentlemen in the transactions of their business. They have a Reader, by whose judgment they are guided in their publications, and like all other traders are governed by their anticipations of profit or loss, rather than any intrinsic merit of a work or its author. I have no influence in this respect, and indeed ought to have none, for my taste does not exactly conform to that of the Public at present. I placed the work in their hands, giving my opinion of it, which was such as I believe I have heretofore expressed to you more than once, leaving them to their own decision.

The[y] have finally declined republishing it for the following reasons: They say that the stories have so recently appeared before the Public in the "Messenger" that they would be no novelty — but most especially they object that there is a degree of obscurity in their application, which will prevent ordinary readers from comprehending their drift, and consequently from enjoying the fine satire they convey. It requires a degree of familiarity with various kinds of knowledge which they do not possess, to enable them to relish the joke; the dish is too refined

for them to banquet on. They desire me, however, to state to Mr. Poe that if he will lower himself a little to the ordinary comprehension of the generality of readers, and prepare a series of original Tales, or a single work, and send them to the Publishers, previous to their appearance in the "Messenger," they will make such arrangements with him as will be liberal and satisfactory.

I regret this decision of the Harpers, though I have not opposed it, because I do not wish to lead them into any measure that might be accompanied by a loss, and felt as I would feel for myself in a similar case. I would not press a work of my own on them, nor do I think Mr. Poe would be gratified at my doing so with one of his.

I hope Mr. Poe will pardon me if the interest I feel in his success should prompt me to take this occasion to suggest to him to apply his fine humor, and his extensive acquirements, to more familiar subjects of satire; to the faults and foibles of our own people, their peculiarities of habits and manners, and above all to the ridiculous affectations and extravagancies of the fashionable English Literature of the day, which we copy with such admirable success and servility.

His quiz on Willis, and the Burlesque of "Blackwood," were not only capital, but what is more, were understood by all. For Satire to be relished, it is necessary that it should be leveled at some thing with which readers are familiar. My own experience has taught me this, in the failure of some efforts of my own formerly.

Be good enough to let me know what disposition I shall make of the work. I am respectfully,

Your friend and Servant,

J. K. PAULDING.[1]

Paulding also wrote directly to Poe, who had apparently requested him to apply to some other New York house.

NEW YORK, March 17, 1836.

DEAR SIR, — In compliance with your wishes it would afford me much pleasure to have proposed the publication of your book to some one respectable Bookseller of this city. But the truth is, there is only one other who publishes anything but School Books, religious works, and the like, and with him I am not on terms that would make it agreeable to me to make any proposition of this nature, either in my own behalf or that of another. I have therefore placed your work in the hands of Messrs. Harpers, to forward with a

[1] Griswold MSS.

Box of Books they are sending to Richmond in a few days, and I hope it will come safely to hand.

I think it would be worth your while, if other engagements permit, to undertake a Tale in a couple of volumes, for that is the magical number. There is a great dearth of good writers at present both in England and this country, while the number of readers and purchasers of books is daily increasing, so that the demand is greater than the supply, in mercantile phrase. Not one work in ten published in England will bear republication here. You would be surprised at their [illegible] mediocrity. I am of opinion that a work of yours would at least bring you a handsome remuneration, though it might not repay your labors, or meet its merits. Should you write such a work, your best way will be to forward the MS. directly to the Harpers, who will be, I presume, governed by the judgment of their Reader, who, from long experience, can tell almost to a certainty what will succeed. I am destitute of this valuable instinct, and my opinion counts for nothing with publishers. In other respects you may command my good offices. I am Dr. Sir, Your friend and Serv't,

J. K. PAULDING.

[1] Griswold MSS.

Harper & Brothers formally declined the volume of tales in a letter to Poe, June, 1836, on the same grounds alleged above.

Early in the year the family had entertained a plan to start a boarding-house, and with this in view Poe sent the following letter to George Poe in Alabama: —

RICHMOND, January 12, 1836.

DEAR SIR, — I take the liberty of addressing you in behalf of a mutual relation, Mrs. William Clemm, late of Baltimore — and at her earnest solicitation.

You are aware that for many years she has been suffering privations and difficulties of no ordinary kind. I know that you have assisted her at a former period, and she has occasionally received aid from her cousins, William and Robert Poe, of Augusta. What little has been heretofore in my own power I have also done.

Having lately established myself in Richmond, and undertaken the editorship of the "Southern Literary Messenger," and my circumstances having thus become better than formerly, I have ventured to offer my aunt a home. She is now therefore in Richmond, with her daughter Virginia, and is for the present boarding at the house of a Mrs. Yarrington. My salary is only

at present about $800 per ann., and the charge per week for our board (Mrs. Clemm's, her daughter's, and my own) is $9. I am thus particular in stating my precise situation that you may be the better enabled to judge in regard to the propriety of granting the request which I am now about to make for Mrs. Clemm.

It is ascertained that if Mrs. C. could obtain the means of opening, herself, a boarding-house in this city, she could support herself and daughter comfortably, with something to spare. But a small capital would be necessary for an undertaking of this nature, and many of the widows of our first people are engaged in it, and find it profitable. I am willing to advance, for my own part, $100, and I believe that Wm. & R. Poe will advance $100. If then you would so far aid her in her design as to loan her yourself $100 she will have sufficient to commence with. I will be responsible for the repayment of the sum, in a year from this date, if you can make it convenient to comply with her request.

I beg you, my dear Sir, to take this subject into consideration. I feel deeply for the distresses of Mrs. Clemm, and I am sure *you* will feel interested in relieving them.

[Signature cut off.]

P. S. I am the son of David Poe, Jr., Mrs. C.'s brother.[1]

George Poe sent the money, but nothing appears to have been done. The family history was continued by the public marriage of Poe with his cousin, May 16, 1836. Poe secured Thomas W. Cleland, the son-in-law of his former landlady in Richmond, as his surety, who gave a marriage bond as the law required; and Cleland was further obliging enough to take oath before the deputy clerk, Charles Howard, "that Virginia E. Clemm is of the full age of twenty-one years, and a resident of the said city." [2] The ceremony was performed on the evening of the same day at the boarding-house of the family, by the Rev. Amasa Converse, a Presbyterian minister, then editor of the "Southern Religious Telegraph." [3] Mrs. Clemm, whom the minister remembered as "being polished, dignified, and agreeable in her bearing," was present, and gave her consent freely; the bride, too, had a pleasing manner, but seemed to him very young.[4] The

[1] Poe to George Poe, MS.

[2] Hustings Court Records, Richmond, Virginia.

[3] *Southern Religious Telegraph*, May 20, 1836; *Richmond Enquirer*, May 20, 1836.

[4] Mrs. F. B. Converse to the author, May 20, 1884.

party then called their friends into the room, where wine and cake were served, and the marriage announced, to their fellow-boarders. Virginia was slightly under fourteen. Poe was twenty-seven.

The boarding-house plan was renewed, under different auspices, in connection with the marriage, and its fortunes are disclosed in the following letter to Kennedy: —

RICHMOND, VA., June 7, 1836.

DEAR SIR, — Having got into a little temporary difficulty I venture to ask you, once more, for aid, rather than apply to any of my new friends in Richmond. Mr. White, having purchased a new house at $10,000, made propositions to my aunt to rent it to her, and to board himself and family with her. This plan was highly advantageous to us, and, having accepted it, all arrangements were made, and I obtained credit for some furniture, &c., to the amount of $200, above what little money I had. But upon examination of the premises purchased; it appears that the house will barely be large enough for one family, and the scheme is laid aside, leaving me now in debt, (to a small amount,) without those means of discharging it upon which I had depended.

In this dilemma I would be greatly indebted

to you for the loan of $100 for six months. This will enable me to meet a note for $100 due in 3 months, and allow me 3 months to return your money. I shall have no difficulty in doing this, as beyond this $100 I owe nothing, and I am now receiving $15 per week, and am to receive $20 after November. All Mr. White's disposable money has been required to make his first payment.

Have you heard anything farther in relation to Mrs. Clemm's estate?

Our "Messenger" is thriving beyond all expectations, and I myself have every prospect of success. It is our design to issue, as soon as possible, a number of the Magazine consisting entirely of articles from our most distinguished *literati*. To this end we have received, and have been promised, a variety of aid from the highest sources, — Mrs. Sigourney, Miss Sedgwick, Paulding, Flint, Halleck, Cooper, Judge Hopkinson, Dew, Governor Cass, J. Q. Adams, and many others. Could you not do me so great a favour as to send me a scrap, however small, from your portfolio? Your name is of the greatest influence in that region where we direct our greatest efforts — in the South.

Any little reminiscence, tale, jeu-d'esprit, his-

torical anecdote, — anything, in short, *with your name*, will answer all our purposes. I presume you have heard of my marriage.

With sincere respect & esteem,

Yours truly,

EDGAR A. POE.[1]

Whether or not Kennedy acceded to his request, the little family took up their abode together, and were temporarily at least well provided for.

Poe's work during these months was brilliantly successful. He contributed personally a large amount of matter. A considerable portion of this had been written before he came to Richmond, especially the tales and poems; he published nearly all his tales, including those that had appeared elsewhere, in the "Visiter," "Godey's," and "The Gift"; and of his old poems he reprinted, in forms more or less revised, "Irene," "A Pæan," "The Valley Nis," "To Helen," "To Science," "Israfel," "The City of Sin," from the New York volume; "The Coliseum," a fragment of "Politian," from the "Visiter"; and "To ——," from his tale in "Godey's." The new poems were five scenes

[1] Kennedy MSS.

from the drama "Politian," the "Hymn" in "Morella," "To Mary," "To Eliza," "To Zante," and the "Bridal Ballad."[1] Besides "Politian" he had written but six new poems in six years.

The paucity of Poe's creative work after leaving Baltimore may be laid partly to his lack of leisure; but the first impulse in romance was spent, and his poetic vein was not steadily productive. He never wrote poetry except in seasons of solitary musing, and even in prose his creative faculty was quiescent for long periods. He was an editor now, and largely employed in the correspondence and routine business of the office, or in simply furnishing copy, or attracting public interest by attention to the topics of the hour, especially in noticing books; he was a not less diligent than facile reviewer. In fact, his genius had entered on a new phase.

The real service that the "Messenger" did for Poe, in his development, was that in his work on it he discovered his critical capacity, just as in Baltimore in his garret he had discovered his

[1] *To Mary*, *To* ——, *To Eliza*, and the *Bridal Ballad* are now known in revised versions, the first three entitled respectively *To F*——, *To One in Paradise*, and *To F*——*s S. O*——*d*. *To Zante* was suggested by a passage in Chateaubriand's *Itinéraire de Paris à Jerusalem*, already mentioned.

imaginative genius for prose romance. Without depreciating either the novelty or effect of his sensational tales, or underrating their brilliant part in securing his reputation, it may be said that it was as a critic that Poe made the editorial hit which placed the new Southern monthly at once beside the "Knickerbocker" and the "New Englander" as a national magazine. The tales by themselves might not have done so. At all events, what was new in himself, and now ran its first course, was the power of the critic, and temporarily it monopolized his intellectual life. Through it he became at once notorious. While at Baltimore he had contributed a few slight book notices, but only when he was publicly known as editor did he, to use the expression of a contemporary, "fall in with his broad-axe." Late in the autumn of 1835 there appeared the loudly-announced, much-bepuffed "Norman Leslie," one of the popular novels of its day; it was ambitious, crude, and foolish, but its pretentiousness seems the particular quality which led Poe to single it out for an example. In the issue for December, 1835, he subjected it to such scrutiny as had never been known in our country before, and he did his task so trenchantly and convincingly, with such spirit and effect, that the

public were widely interested; they bought, read, and looked for more. The Southern press with one voice cried on havoc; they were only too glad to find in their own country a youth with the boldness to rouse and the skill to worry Knickerbocker game; for the young author, Theodore S. Fay, was a pet of the metropolitan littérateurs and an associate editor of the "New York Mirror," then the best literary weekly of the country. Even if Poe had not been applauded to the echo, he was not of a nature to hesitate in following up a predetermined line of policy; but he soon found a stand making against him. There was some show at first of closing the New York columns, with gentleman-like contempt, to any remonstrance against the insult; but at length the "Mirror," after several insidious attacks, made one openly, to wit: —

"☞ Those who have read the notices of American books in a certain 'southern' monthly which is striving to gain notoriety by the loudness of its abuse, may find amusement in the sketch, in another page, entitled 'The Successful Novel.' The 'Southern Literary Messenger' knows ☞ *by experience* ☞ what it is to write a successless novel. ☞"[1]

[1] *New York Mirror*, April 9, 1836.

The sketch referred to was a clever squib in the style of Poe's "Lionizing," and while satirizing his attention to the minutiæ of style and his readiness to cry plagiarism somewhat in a jackdaw manner, as if the word were his whole stock in trade, insinuated further that the Harpers had rejected Poe's longer, as the "Mirror" itself had his shorter, effusions. Poe replied with a flat denial: that he "never in his life wrote or published, or attempted to publish, a novel either successful or *successless*," [1] — a statement which must be understood as relegating into nonentity the alleged early work of Poe, "An Artist at Home and Abroad." This trivial incident drew from Poe a statement of the spirit in which he believed himself to be undertaking the reform of criticism, and the grounds of his action: —

"There was a time, it is true, when we cringed to foreign opinion — let us even say when we paid a most servile deference to British critical dicta. That an American book could, by any possibility, be worthy perusal, was an idea by no means extensively prevalent in the land; and if we were induced to read at all the productions of our native writers, it was only after repeated assurances from England that such productions

[1] *Southern Literary Messenger*, ii, 327 (April, 1836).

were not altogether contemptible. . . . Not so, however, with our present follies. We are becoming boisterous and arrogant in the pride of a too speedily assumed literary freedom. We throw off with the most presumptuous and unmeaning hauteur *all* deference whatever to foreign opinion — we forget, in the puerile inflation of vanity, that *the world* is the true theatre of the biblical histrio — we get up a hue and cry about the necessity of encouraging native writers of merit — we blindly fancy that we can accomplish this by indiscriminate puffing of good, bad, and indifferent, without taking the trouble to consider that what we choose to denominate encouragement is thus, by its general application, precisely the reverse. In a word, so far from being ashamed of the many disgraceful literary failures to which our own inordinate vanities and misapplied patriotism have lately given birth, and so far from deeply lamenting that these daily puerilities are of home manufacture, we adhere pertinaciously to our original blindly conceived idea, and thus often find ourselves involved in the gross paradox of liking a stupid book the better because, sure enough, its stupidity is American." [1]

[1] *Southern Literary Messenger*, ii, 326 (April, 1836).

These views were by no means novel or unshared. The periodical press was frequently weighted or padded with essays, reports of lectures, or editorial remarks, endeavoring to explain the feebleness of American criticism, and deprecating it. A writer in the "Knickerbocker" itself ascribes many causes, not confined to that period, such as the interests of publishers, the social relations of editors, the wish to encourage the young, the fear of being esteemed unpatriotic, and the like. What distinguished Poe was the audacity with which he took the unenvied post, and the vigor with which he struck. Undoubtedly his worldly fortunes were affected by the enmities he thus made. The New Yorkers never forgave him. Colonel Stone, of the "Commercial Advertiser," and W. Gaylord Clarke, of the "Philadelphia Gazette," denounced him, and in the house of his friends the "Newbern Spectator" was an envious foe. But the presumptuous young critic did not therefore withdraw his hand; and though at a time when Gifford and Wilson handed down the traditions of critical style he did not write with the urbanity that now obtains, though he was not choice in his phrase nor delicate in his ridicule, all of his adverse decisions but one (that on "Sartor Resartus") have

been sustained. Moreover, the severity, what is called the venom and heartlessness, of these critiques, has been much exaggerated; as he himself pointed out in a public letter to a contemporary newspaper [1] which had reproached him for severity. There were in all but four like that upon "Norman Leslie," and these were milder than the first, a fact very creditable to Poe when one recollects how loudly he was urged "to hang, draw, and Quarterly," and how aptly such a literary temper fell in with the proud self-confidence of his nature. His end was justice, if his manner was not courtesy.

In fact, his reputation as a critic would now suffer rather for the mercy he showed than for the vengeance he took. With what hesitancy he suggests that Mrs. Sigourney might profitably forget Mrs. Hemans; with what consideration he hints a fault in Mrs. Ellet, or just notices a blemish in Miss Gould; with what respect he treats Mellen and Gallagher! And if he asserts that Drake had an analogical rather than a creative mind, and insinuates that Halleck's laurel was touched with an artificial green, — these were the names that a lesser man would have let

[1] *Richmond Courier and Daily Compiler*, September 2, 1836. Reprinted in *The Virginia Poe*, viii, pp. xii–xv.

pass unchallenged. The whole mass of this criticism — but a small portion of which deals with imaginative work — is particularly characterized by a minuteness of treatment which springs from a keen, artistic sensibility, and by that constant regard to the originality of the writer which is so frequently an element in the jealousy of genius. One wearies in reading it now; but one gains thereby the better impression of Poe's patience and of the alertness and compass of his mental curiosity. Here and there, too, one sees signs of his own education, as when he praises with enthusiasm Godwin and Coleridge, Bulwer, Disraeli, and Scott; or one finds the marks of his peculiar individuality, the early bent of his mind, as when he mentions the love of analytical beauty in this author, and whispers to the next the secret of verisimilitude by obscuring the improbability of the general in the naturalness and accuracy of the particular. In especial some progress is made in his poetic theory, but this must be treated by itself.

He had reprinted without a signature his "Letter to B——" from the 1831 edition of his poems, with the editorial remark that "of course we shall not be called upon to indorse all the writer's opinions." To the somewhat bald

conclusions there advanced, that poetry should aim at pleasure, and be brief, indefinite, and musical, he now had something to add in a peculiar dialect of German metaphysics and phrenology, then the fashion. The most significant passage is one in which, after identifying "the Faculty of Ideality" with the "Sentiment of Poesy," he goes on as follows: —

"This sentiment is the sense of the beautiful, of the sublime, and of the mystical. Thence spring immediately admiration of the fair flowers the fairer forests, the bright valleys and rivers and mountains of the Earth — and love of the gleaming stars and other burning glories of Heaven — and, mingled up inextricably with this love and this admiration of Heaven and of Earth, the unconquerable desire — *to know.* Poesy is the sentiment of Intellectual Happiness here, and the Hope of a higher Intellectual Happiness hereafter. Imagination is its soul. With the *passions* of mankind, — although it may modify them greatly — although it may exalt, or inflame, or purify, or control them — it would require little ingenuity to prove that it has no inevitable, and indeed no necessary coexistence. . . . We do not hesitate to say that a man highly endowed with the powers of

Causality — that is to say, a man of metaphysical acumen — will, even with a very deficient share of Ideality, compose a finer poem (if we test it, as we should, by its measure of exciting the Poetic Sentiment) than one who, without such metaphysical acumen, shall be gifted, in the most extraordinary degree, with the faculty of Ideality. For a poem is not the Poetic faculty, but *the means* of exciting it in mankind." [1]

Poe's meaning may not be entirely plain at first sight, built up as it is out of obscure Coleridgian elements, which he derived mainly from the "Biographia Literaria." In the plainest words, Poe conceived that beauty, whether natural or imaginary, whether springing from the creative act of God or the creative thought of man, affects the mind as a glimpse of the infinite, and thus excites instantaneous pleasure, and furthermore, by intimating a fuller delight beyond, stimulates men to endeavor to penetrate deeper into the mystery that encompasses them. Beauty is thus a revelation of infinite truth, seized only by the imagination. Poetry consequently, according to Poe's view at this time, makes its highest appeal to the intellect instead of the passions, and requires imagination rather

[1] *Southern Literary Messenger*, ii, 328 (April, 1836).

than sympathetic power in both its makers and its readers.

The remainder of his proposition amounts only to saying that one who is able to analyze the elements which give rise to his own experience of the vision that poetry brings, and thus to discern how such moods are caused, can by forethought so select and combine these elements as to arouse the same state in others, whereas one who is merely susceptible to such experience might not be capable of reproducing it with certainty: the latter has the poetic temperament, the former has in addition the analytical power which is necessary to art; one is the creature, the other the master, of his inspiration. All this is a good illustration of the rationalizing by which Poe was accustomed to feed his own vanity indirectly. Did he not possess "analytical power"? Was he not distinguished by "metaphysical acumen"? And through all, too, most noticeable is his constant parroting of Coleridge, who was, taken all in all, the guiding genius of Poe's early intellectual life.

Of more consequence than either Poe's mysticism or his metaphysical acumen, however, was the lesson he learned from Schlegel, and now adduced in support of his pet canon, that poems

should be brief. "In pieces of less extent," he writes, "the pleasure is *unique*, in the proper acceptation of that term — the understanding is employed, without difficulty, in the contemplation of the picture *as a whole* — and thus its effect will depend, in a very great degree, upon the perfection of its finish, upon the nice adaptation of its constituent parts, and especially upon what is rightly termed by Schlegel, the *unity or totality of interest*." [1] This is the first expression of Poe's intellectual sense of poetic form, the quality in which his early verse was most defective and his latest most eminent.

The most noted of the transitory articles of a miscellaneous nature that Poe furnished, simply as a magazine writer, was that in which he demonstrated that Maelzel's Chess Player must be operated by human agency, and solved the methods used. The paper was well reasoned, and shows that its author had a quick and observant eye, but it has been vastly overrated, as any one may convince himself by comparing it minutely with Sir David Brewster's "Letters on Natural Magic," to which it stands confessedly obliged, and from which it is partly paraphrased. Another article, "Pinakidia," being selections from

[1] *Southern Literary Messenger*, ii, 113 (January, 1836).

Poe's commonplace book, is worth a moment's detention for the light it incidentally throws on his habits of quotation. In prefacing the clippings (which by an obvious but very unfortunate misprint are declared to be original instead of *not* original), he says that in foreign magazines extracts of this sort are usually taken "by wholesale from such works as the 'Bibliothèque des Memorabilia Literaria,' the 'Recueil des Bon (sic) Pensées,' the 'Lettres Édifiantes et Curieuses,' the 'Literary Memoirs' of Sallengré, the 'Mélanges Litéraires' (sic) of Suard and André, or the 'Pièces Intéressantes et Peu Connues' of La Place."[1] These titles must have been taken down at haphazard, for a thorough search of bibliographies fails to reveal the existence of the first two, and the others, apart from their bad French, are incorrectly given. The earmark in this masquerade of borrowed learning is seen in the "'Mélanges Litéraires' of Suard and André," — a title evidently noted from the recent translation of "Schlegel's Lectures on the Drama" (which furnished some extracts to the body of the article), for there alone it occurs, the translator having erred in rendering "Suard und Andre" (andere), that is, Suard and others; Poe inno-

[1] *Southern Literary Messenger*, August, 1836.

cently followed him, and so tripped. The satirical young editor goes on to say that "Disraeli's 'Curiosities of Literature,' 'Literary Character,' and 'Calamities of Authors' have of late years proved exceedingly convenient to some little American pilferers in this line, but are now becoming too generally known"; and forthwith he takes from this same convenient repertory several fine bits, including nearly all the alleged plagiarisms, of the poets.[1]

Poe might now justly regard his future as bright. The "Messenger" had so prospered under his management that it was an assured success, and was likely to afford him a constantly increasing income. His reputation was steadily growing; the Southern press, with a few exceptions, was vociferous in its praises, and Poe took care that these acclaims should not die away unechoed; he was at all times his own press-agent. He was settled in life; his salary was seven

[1] A more curious instance of Poe's mode of dealing with authorities is his note on *Israjel*, which originally read, "And the angel Israfel, who has the sweetest voice of all God's creatures: *Koran*." The passage referred to is not in the Koran, but in Sale's *Preliminary Discourse* (iv, 71). Poe derived it from the notes to Moore's *Lalla Rookh*, where it is correctly attributed to Sale. At a later time he interpolated the entire phrase, "whose heart-strings are a lute" (the idea on which his poem is founded), which is neither in Moore, Sale, nor the Koran.

hundred and eighty dollars, and was to be a thousand and forty: he was actively planning for future work; and then there was a sudden change. The first number of the magazine for 1837 announced that, "Mr. Poe's attention being called in another direction, he will decline, with the present number, the editorial duties of the 'Messenger'"; and on a later page Mr. White added that the resignation had taken effect January 3, but would not prevent Poe's contributing articles from time to time. Up to this announcement he had published no tale since the previous April, and no poem since August; of criticism, however, there had been no lack. The October issue was delayed by the illness of both editor and publisher, and the November issue by a press of business, while in the latter there is a very marked shrinking of the space devoted to reviews, and in December there was no number issued. The tide of his published writing had ceased. He had, however, in private, turned again to the vein of invention opened in the "MS. Found in a Bottle," and had begun a long sea-narrative of adventure, "Arthur Gordon Pym." He may have been preoccupied with this tale and his delayed reviews. The January number, however, in which his resignation was

announced, is crowded with reviews, one third of the matter, about thirty-five octavo pages, being by him, besides the first installment of the sea-story, and he had desired that more of the latter should be inserted, a portion having been thrown over to February. It is plain that in view of his departure, both he and Mr. White wished to exhaust all of his copy in hand.

The separation was not suddenly or violently effected. The two parted friends, and Mr. White continued throughout life to speak of Poe with great kindness and warm feeling. When the matter was settled Poe wrote to his old friend Wilmer, whose work he had kindly noticed in the "Messenger" in words that prove his friendship, that if he would come to Richmond the position would be given to him. Two weeks after the official cessation of Poe's editorship White wrote to him a letter showing their personal relations:

January 17, 1837.

MR. POE, — If it be possible, without breaking in on any previous arrangement, I will get more than the 1st portion of "Pym" in — though I much fear that will be impossible. If I had read even ten lines of Magruder's manuscript it would have saved me the expense of

putting it in type. It is all words [illegible]. He will have to live a little longer in the world before he can write well enough to please the readers of the magazine. Touching Cary's piece, gratitude to him for pecuniary assistance obliges me to insert it.

You are certainly as well aware as I am, that the last $20 I advanced to you was in consideration of what you were to write for me by the piece. I also made you a promise on Saturday that I would do something more for you to-day, — and I never make even a promise without intending to perform it, — and though it is entirely out of my power to send you up anything this morning, yet I will do something more sure, before night or early to-morrow — if I have to borrow it from my friends.

Truly yours, T. W. W.[1]

Poe furnished no more installments of the serial.

Kennedy, who should have known the facts, writes: "He was irregular, eccentric, and querulous, and soon gave up his place."[2] Poe himself afterward said: "For a brief period while I resided in Richmond and edited the 'Messenger'

[1] Griswold MSS. [2] Kennedy MSS.

I certainly did give way, at long intervals, to the temptation held out on all sides by the spirit of Southern conviviality. My sensitive temperament could not stand an excitement which was an every-day matter to my companions. In short, it sometimes happened that I was completely intoxicated. For some days after each excess I was invariably confined to bed."[1]

The only contemporary reference by him to this matter occurs in a business letter, in which, although it was written six days after his resignation went into effect, he accepts the article from Magruder mentioned by White, without any hint that he had ceased to be the editor of the magazine, except that he begs pardon for delay because of "ill health and a weight of various and harassing business."[2] Mr. White, despite the cold address of his last communication, had been Poe's kindly disposed friend, and must have required on business grounds strong reasons to make him part with the editor who had proved his capacity by helping, in his sphere of the enterprise, to make the "Messenger" the good investment it was; its circulation had gone from five hundred to thirty-five hundred

[1] Poe to Snodgrass, April 1, 1841, *Baltimore American*, 1881.
[2] Poe to Allan B. Magruder, January 9, 1837, MS.

copies. In view of these various facts the obvious grounds for Mr. White's willingness to let him go lay in his editor's failing service and its attendant circumstances in the regimen of his life.

What part, if any, was played in these events by his flirtation with Mr. White's daughter, of which the tradition survives in Richmond, or whether this was a cause of his hasty marriage with Virginia, are matters too obscure to be more than briefly mentioned. From the beginning his marriage was, in a sense, no marriage; it was a family arrangement. His love for his wife was never that of man for woman, and Virginia, on her side, was always contented with the affection shown to a favored child. Poe, himself, was fond of society, mingled with it, danced with much pleasure, used his powers of fascination; he was always a ladies' man in Richmond, from the beginning to the end of his career. He was, besides, arrogant and resentful toward those whom he disliked. His social life at the time seems to have been embarrassing to others and unsatisfactory to himself, and he had always had enemies and ill-wishers in the city. In many ways it was natural for him to seek a new residence for his career.

Thus Mr. White's willingness to let him go was only one element in a complicated situation. Poe himself seems to have been willing to go. His rapid and brilliant success had led him to indulge high hopes of his editorial abilities, and he was less solicitous to retain his post. He had received an invitation from Dr. Francis L. Hawks, a North Carolina divine settled in New York City, whose work he had lately reviewed in the "Messenger," to contribute to the newly projected "New York Review." He was irked, editorially, by his subjection to a man, who, however kindly, was his mental inferior; and he was discontented, financially, because he had no proprietary interest nor share in the profits of the magazine. Reputation, merely, and his salary did not seem to him a sufficient reward. He had developed all sides of his genius, and was man-grown. He now centred his worldly ambition on becoming an independent editor of a magazine that he should own wholly or in part. He believed in the financial success so to be won in the magazine-world, and the swift and great development of popular magazines soon after justified his belief. He determined to attempt to realize his dream; and, having a corresponding acquaintance with

Paulding, Anthon, and Hawks, he decided to go to New York, as offering the most favorable opening, and there subsist by hack work until he could execute his plans. He wished to be a great editor, and therefore changed his locality and, with a true sense of the market and the field, went North. The tradition of the magazine is that "Poe besought the proprietor to reinstate him as editor, but Mr. White, in terms firm yet kindly, refused to do so."[1] Whether Mr. White or he broke the connection is immaterial. He had found the master-current of his own life.

[1] *The Southern Literary Messenger, 1834–1864.* By Benjamin Blake Minor, editor and proprietor from 1843 to 1847. Washington: The Neale Publishing Co., 1905: p. 64.

CHAPTER VI

THE NEW CAREER

On leaving Richmond Poe made his way with his family by slow stages through Baltimore and Philadelphia to New York, where he took up his residence at 113½ Carmine Street. If he had gone there with the expectation of obtaining permanent literary employment from Dr. Hawks on the "New York Review," he was soon undeceived, nor did Anthon or Paulding avail him much. The first number of the magazine had appeared in March, but the financial panic that then swept over the country made the enterprise more difficult and hazardous, and the second issue was delayed until October. In this was a notice by Poe of Stephens's "Travels in Arabia Petræa," prepared at an earlier time and now rewritten. The article, which was attributed to Secretary Cass, is a reviewer's compilation, by extract and paraphrase, from the book itself and Keith's lately published work on Prophecy; it is written in a very orthodox vein, but its main point is a criticism of that doctor's interpretation

of a few verses in Isaiah and Ezekiel respecting Idumæa, and turns on a rendering from the Hebrew. He had applied for this to Anthon, who inclosed it with the following note:—

NEW YORK, June 1, 1837.

DEAR SIR, — I owe you an apology for not having answered your letter of the 27th sooner, but I was occupied at the time with matters that admitted of no delay, and was compelled therefore to lay your communication on the table for a day or two. I hope you will find what is written below satisfactory. Do not wait to pay me a formal visit, but call and introduce yourself.

Yours truly,

CHAS. ANTHON.[1]

Poe inserted the passage in his review textually as received; and he reprinted it, as his own, at favorable opportunities afterwards. He appears not to have contributed again to the theological quarterly, and no further connection with Anthon at this time is disclosed. Less is known of Poe at this period than at any other in his career. The only other contemporary publication that has been traced is the grotesque tale, "Mystification," which appeared under the

[1] Griswold MSS.

title, "Von Jung, the Mystific," in the "American Monthly Magazine," June, 1837.

Paulding, on his part, was now removing to Washington, but he may have been the medium of offering the "Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym,"[1] when completed, to the Harpers, who announced it in May, 1838, and published it at the end of July. Tales of the sea, under the influence of Cooper and Marryatt, were then at the height of their popularity, and many grew up and withered in a day. In selecting his subject, however, Poe was not merely adopting the literary fashion, but, with the sure journalistic instinct that characterized him, was trading on the momentary curiosity of the public, which was highly interested in Antarctic explorations

[1] *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym, of Nantucket;* comprising the Details of a Mutiny and Atrocious Butchery on board the American Brig Grampus, on her Way to the South Seas — with an Account of the Recapture of the Vessel by the Survivors; their Shipwreck, and subsequent Horrible Sufferings from Famine; their Deliverance by means of the British Schooner Jane Gray; the brief Cruise of this latter Vessel in the Antarctic Ocean; her Capture, and the Massacre of her Crew among a Group of Islands in the 84th parallel of Southern latitude; together with the incredible Adventures and Discoveries still further South, to which that distressing Calamity gave rise. 12mo, pp. 198. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1838.

in consequence of the expedition then fitting out under the auspices of the government. Poe, who was acquainted with the chief projector, J. N. Reynolds, had found some attraction in the scheme from the first. He had reviewed the congressional report on the matter, and twice written editorially about it while still editor of the "Messenger." In this way his attention was originally drawn to the subject.

The narrative is circumstantial and might well seem plausible to the unreflecting and credulous, although there are a few slips, as where in the fifth chapter Augustus, who died on the voyage, is said to have revealed some matters to Arthur only in later years. Its credibility, however, is not so strange, nor the realistic art so ingenious, as might be thought, since portions of it are either suggested from other lately printed books, such as Irving's "Astoria," or directly compiled (the detailed account of the South Seas is taken almost textually from Morell's "Voyages"[1]) by the easy process of close paraphrase. What is peculiar to the book is its accumulation of blood-curdling incidents. All the horrors of the deep are brought in and huddled

[1] *Narrative of Four Voyages to the South Seas and Pacific, 1822–31.* By Benjamin Morell. New York, 1832: pp. 183 *et seq.*

up together; the entombment of Arthur in the hold, where he suffers everything possible to his situation, from starvation to an attack by a mad dog, the butchery of the mutineers, the sickening riot, the desperate fight between the two factions on board, poison, shipwreck, cannibalism among friends, make the staple of the first part of Pym's adventures; some portions, such as the disguise of Pym as a putrescent corpse, the ship of carrion men with the feeding gull, or the details of Augustus's death, are so revoltingly horrible, so merely physically disgusting, that one can hardly understand how even Poe could endure to suggest or develop them. Death in every fearful form is the constant theme; even after the ship reaches the southern regions the author diversifies his geographical and botanical extracts only by the apprehension of living inhumation, or the analysis of the sensation of falling down a precipice, or wholesale murder. Poe's touch is noticeable here and there throughout, it is true; but he does not show the distinctive subtlety, force, and fire of his genius until the very end, and then only in a way to discredit the plausibility he had previously aimed at. When the finely imagined isle of Tsalal comes in view, the real tale in its original part begins, and from that point the

keeping and gradation of the narrative is exquisite, while a wonderful interest is afforded by the slight intimation and gradual revelation of the white country to the south. The caverns of the hieroglyphs are suggested by the Sinaitic written mountains; but after the voyagers leave the island and are drawn on toward the pole, the startling scenery, by which expectation is raised to the highest pitch without loss of vagueness, forms one of his most original and powerful landscapes.

The volume was noticed by the press, but had little success in this country, and the author, of course, derived no profit from its reprint by Putnam in England, where the country public are said to have been hoaxed by it. The main income of the family at this time seems to have been derived from Mrs. Clemm's keeping boarders, one of whom, Mr. William Gowans, a bookseller, declares that for the eight months or more during which he lived with the family he never saw Poe otherwise than sober, courteous, and gentlemanly.[1] Mrs. Clemm's earnings seem to have been no more than sufficient, since Poe, when in the summer he decided to remove to Philadelphia, was forced to borrow money.

[1] *Gowans' Sale Catalogue*, No. 28, 1870, p. 11.

Thither he went in midsummer, apparently following his market, since in a letter of September 4 to his old acquaintance, Brooks, he declines to write an article upon Irving, on the ground that he has "two engagements which it would be ruinous to neglect."[1] This may refer to his text-book of Conchology, upon which he was employed during the winter. This volume[2] has given rise to so much discussion that it must receive more notice than it would otherwise deserve. It was charged in his lifetime that the work was a simple reprint of an English book, Captain Thomas Brown's "Conchology," which Poe had the effrontery to copyright in this country as his own. He indignantly denied the accusation, and said: —

"I wrote the Preface and Introduction, and translated from Cuvier the accounts of the ani-

[1] Poe to Brooks, Didier, p. 65.

[2] *The Conchologist's First Book; or, a System of Testaceous Malacology*, arranged expressly for the use of schools, in which the animals, according to Cuvier, are given with the shells, a great number of new species added, and the whole brought up, as accurately as possible, to the present condition of the science. By Edgar A. Poe. With illustrations of two hundred and fifteen shells, presenting a correct type of each genus. Philadelphia: published for the author by Haswell, Barrington & Haswell, and for sale by the principal booksellers in the United States. 1839. 12mo, pp. 156.

mals, &c. *All* school-books are necessarily made in a similar way." [1]

What Poe's understanding was of the manner in which authors of school-books use their authorities may be seen from his own words: —

"It is the practice of quacks to paraphrase page after page, rearranging the order of paragraphs, making a slight alteration in point of fact here and there, but preserving the spirit of the whole, its information, erudition, etc., etc., while everything is so completely *rewritten* as to leave no room for a direct charge of plagiarism; and this is considered and lauded as originality. Now, he who, in availing himself of the labors of his predecessors (and it is clear that all scholars *must* avail themselves of such labors) — he who shall copy *verbatim* the passages to be desired, without attempt at palming off their spirit as original with himself, is certainly no plagiarist, even if he fail to make *direct* acknowledgment of indebtedness, — is unquestionably *less* of the plagiarist than the disingenuous and contemptible quack who wriggles himself, as above explained, into a reputation for originality, a reputation quite out of place in a case of this kind — the public, of course, never caring a straw whether he be original or not." [2]

[1] Poe to Eveleth, Ingram, i, 168. [2] *Works*, viii, 36.

In this passage Poe wrote from experience; for in the parts of the "Conchologist's First Book" which he claims as his own both methods are pursued. The first is illustrated by the "Introduction" (pp. 3–8), which is a close paraphrase from Brown's[1] volume, the thoughts being identical in both, their sequence similar, and the authorities quoted the same. The second is illustrated by the plates, which are copied from Brown, and by the "Explanation of the Parts of Shells" (pp. 9–20), which is verbatim from the same source, and the "classification," which is reprinted from Wyatt's "Conchology,"[2] a large and expensive volume published the preceding year, to which Poe acknowledges his obligations in his preface. In the body of the work, the order, the nomenclature, and the descriptions of the shells are a paraphrase of Wyatt, at first close, but as the writer grew more

[1] *The Conchologist's Text-Book.* Embracing the arrangements of Lamarck and Linnæus, with a glossary of technical terms. By Captain Thomas Brown, Fellow, etc., etc. Illustrated by 19 engravings on steel. Fourth edition. Glasgow: Archibald Fullarton & Co. 1837.

[2] *A Manual of Conchology according to the System laid down by Lamarck, with the Late Improvements of De Blainville. Exemplified and arranged for the Use of Students.* By Thomas Wyatt, M. A. Illustrated by 36 plates, etc., etc. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1838.

deft at the phraseology more free; and the description of the animals is, as Poe stated, translated from Cuvier. The volume concludes with an original glossary and an index from Wyatt.

These being the facts as they are shown by a direct comparison of all the books involved, there can be no doubt that the real state of the case is given by Professor John G. Anthony, of Harvard College, who received his information from Wyatt. The latter said that as his work of the previous year proved too expensive for the public, and as the Harpers refused to bring it out in a cheaper form, it was determined to publish a new book which should be sufficiently different from the former to escape any suit for the infringement of copyright; and Poe was selected to father it.[1] This is supported by the fact that Wyatt, who went about lecturing on the subject, carried the volume with him for sale. It was copyrighted in Poe's name, and appeared about April, 1839, when it was favorably noticed by the press.[2] Poe shared the responsibility with others, for it will hardly be maintained that Poe was ignorant of the true character of the book

[1] Professor John G. Anthony to John Parker, June 22, 1875, MS.

[2] *Saturday Evening Chronicle and Mirror of the Times*, Philadelphia, April 27, 1839.

to which he put his name. He is to be credited, too, with a translation and digest of Lemonnier's "Natural History," which was published the same spring under Wyatt's name; but there is no indication that he had any part in this work beyond his own statement, in reviewing it, that he spoke "from personal knowledge, and the closest inspection and collation."[1]

Meanwhile Poe's literary career, apart from this hack work, had the casual character that marks the life of the unattached writer. His friend, Brooks, had bought Fairfield's review, "The North American Quarterly Magazine" of Baltimore, and continued it as a monthly under the name of the "American Museum of Literature and the Arts"; and, being then interested in Poe, who was sending him articles, he saved from the waste basket, he says, the last of the "Tales of the Folio Club," "Siope" ("Silence"), a fine piece of imaginative prose, which consequently appeared, in the fall of 1838, in the "Baltimore Book for 1839," an annual edited by Carpenter and Arthur. Brooks himself printed in the first number of the "Museum," September, 1838, "Ligeia"; and this was followed by the satirical extravaganza, "The Signora Psyche Zeno-

[1] *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*, v, 62 (July, 1839).

bia—The Scythe of Time" ("How to write a Blackwood Article" and "A Predicament"), in December; two pages of "Literary Small Talk," in January, 1839; as much more in February; and a poem, "The Haunted Palace," in April. For these Poe received little or no pay,—five or ten dollars, if anything at all. These pieces, together with "Von Jung, the Mystific," already mentioned, even in conjunction with his work on "Arthur Gordon Pym" and the text-books, seem insufficient to account for Poe's time between January, 1837, and January, 1839, and it is likely that material was slowly accumulating in the desk.

Poe had slowly begun to establish some connection with the city press, perhaps by the assistance of Wilmer, who was now pursuing his checkered journalistic career in Philadelphia, and on May 8, 1839, he published the grotesque sketch of "The Devil in the Belfry," in the "Saturday Evening Chronicle." In one way and another he made his name known locally, and found work to do, however humble and ill paid. E. Burke Fisher, an old contributor to the "Messenger," who in May of this year had ventured with another sanguine man, Mr. W. Whitney, to start a magazine, "The Literary Examiner and

Western Monthly Review," at Pittsburg, then at the extreme confines of the American literary world, made him an offer of four dollars a page for critical reviews; but as Fisher published editorially, and with emendations of his own, the single article contributed, a review of "Tortesa," apparently in July, it led only to Poe's declaring later that "no greater scamp ever lived,"[1] and congratulating himself that the magazine died the next month without circulating its fourth number. He took the matter probably with a more cheerful if not a higher spirit because he had already obtained permanent employment and a fresh opportunity to distinguish himself as an editor.

In July, 1837, William Evans Burton, an English comedian who was ambitious of winning literary as well as histrionic fame in his adopted country, had launched "The Gentleman's Magazine" in the very darkest period of the financial depression, and with singular felicity he had succeeded in his venture. At first this periodical, which he both owned and edited, was characterized by the lightest of stories and the most sluggish of poems; it was padded with clippings, translations, and the usual et caetera of its

[1] Poe to J. E. Snodgrass, July 12, 1841.

[*Facsimile of a portion of original MS.*
By courtesy of Mrs. W. M. Griswold]

And all with pearls and ruby glowing
Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing
And sparkling evermore,
A troop of Echoes whose sweet duty
Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
Assailed the monarch's high estate.
(Ah, let us mourn! — for never morrow
Shall dawn upon him, desolate!)
And round about his home the glory
That blushed and bloomed
Is but a dim-remembered story
Of the old-time entombed.

And travellers, now, within that valley,
Through the encrimsoned windows see
Vast forms that move fantastically
To a discordant melody,

kind, including the scrappy reviews, made principally by the scissors, that then went under the name of criticism; but Burton devoted himself to developing local talent, and the Philadelphia editors, novelists, and poetasters, male and female, stood by their patron. The fourth volume began, in 1839, with golden promises of better printing, elegant engravings, and contributions from a long list of writers, in which, beside the names of Leigh Hunt, Douglas Jerrold, and James Montgomery, whose wares were presumably stolen, figured the patronymics of thirty-two native authors, for the most part of Philadelphian or Southern extraction, now impartially forgotten. Poe's friends, Wilmer and Brooks, were among them, but he himself was not mentioned. Once, indeed, in the previous September, he had come under the notice of the magazine, but only anonymously as the author of "Arthur Gordon Pym," in which capacity he had been flippantly treated. There is no evidence that he wrote anything for Burton until July, when his name was printed in conjunction with the former's as associate editor of the periodical whose variable title was then "Burton's Gentleman's Magazine and American Monthly Review." This public announcement, he said,

was against his will. He had retained, it is plain, firmly rooted in his mind the ambition to have a magazine of his own, and in the mean time was pursuing that policy of hack work and expectation which he had laid down for himself. In making some approaches to Burton, earlier in the year, he was merely seeking employment, — so he represented the matter later, — and did not intend to give up even temporarily the design he cherished, or to return to that scorned position of an underling and salaried editor which he held at Richmond. His application has not been found; but Burton's answer was as follows: —

PHILADELPHIA, May 10, 1839.

EDGAR A. POE, Esq.:

My dear Sir, — I have given your proposal a fair consideration. I wish to form some such engagement as that which you have proposed, and know of no one more likely to suit my views than yourself. The expenses of the Magazine are already wofully heavy; more so than my circulation warrants. I am certain that my expenditure exceeds that of any publication now extant, including the monthlies which are double in price. Competition is high — new claimants are daily rising. I am therefore compelled to give expen-

sive plates, thicker paper, and better printing than my antagonists, or allow them to win the goal. My contributors cost me something handsome, and the losses upon credit, exchange, etc., are becoming frequent and serious. I mention this list of difficulties as some slight reason why I do not close with your offer, which is indubitably liberal, without any delay.

Shall we say ten dollars per week for the remaining portion of this year? Should we remain together, which I see no reason to negative, your proposition shall be in force for 1840. A month's notice to be given on either side previous to a separation.

Two hours a day, except occasionally, will, I believe, be sufficient for all required, except in the production of any article of your own. At all events you could easily find time for any other light avocation — supposing that you did not exercise your talents in behalf of any publication interfering with the prospects of the G. M.

I shall dine at home to-day at 3. If you will cut your mutton with me, good. If not, write or see me at your leisure.

I am, my dear Sir, your obedt. Servt.,

W. E. BURTON.[1]

[1] Griswold MSS.

Poe entered on his duties, presumably on this understanding, shortly after this date, and contributed to the first number that bore his name, for July, a few brief book-notices and some of his old poems. He certainly did not put himself forward with much energy, and at the close of the first six months the only original work done by him exclusively for "Burton's," besides numerous but entirely perfunctory reviews, consisted of three tales, "The Man that was Used Up," for August, "The Fall of the House of Usher," for September, and "The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion," for December. The tales for October and November were "William Wilson," credited to "The Gift" for 1840, and "Morella," credited to the forthcoming "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque."

In this fall, and in evident preparation for the appearance of his collected tales, Poe sent, in their first printed form, "Ligeia," "The Fall of the House of Usher," and "William Wilson," to some men whose good opinion he desired to have. He had through life the habit of sending tales and poems to persons of distinction in the literary world and soliciting thereby their attention. He kept the replies, and it was from this store that he furnished later an appendix of

THE DEVIL IN THE BELFRY

encomiums to the first newspaper biography of him, in addition to such as had been publicly made. He hoped much from these first examples of his peculiar imaginative power, and it was from motives of respect as well as of interest that he now laid them before persons whose judgment, it may be believed, he most regarded and whose position was such as to render their commendation authoritative and useful. James E. Heath, the first editor of the "Messenger," was one of these; his reply is interesting, not only as a contemporary view of this kind of romance, but also as a natural pendant to Poe's association with White.

RICHMOND, 12 September, 1839.

DEAR SIR,— Since the receipt of yours of the 5 inst. I have been so exceedingly occupied, and withal so very much indisposed, that I could not until within the last day or two take a peep into the interesting magazine which you were good enough to send me. I have read your article "The Fall of the House of Usher" with attention, and I think it among the best of your compositions of that class which I have seen. A man need not have a critical judgment nor a very refined taste to decide that no one could have written the tale without possessing great scope

of imagination, vigorous thought, and a happy command of language; but I am sure you will appreciate my candor when I say that I never could feel much interest in that class of compositions. I mean that I never could experience pleasure in reading tales of horror and mystery, however much the narrative should be dignified by genius. They leave a painful and melancholy impression on my mind, and I do not perceive their tendency to improve the heart.

I have had a conversation with White since the receipt of your letter, and took the liberty to hint to him your convictions of an unfriendly spirit manifested on his part towards you. I am happy to inform you that he disclaims the existence of any unkind feeling; on the contrary professes that your prosperity and happiness would yield him pleasure. He is not aware of having spoken or written anything with a design to injure you, or anything more in censure or disparagement than what he has said to you in person when you resided here. I am inclined to think that you entirely mistake the man if you suppose that a particle of malignity lurks in his composition. My long acquaintance with him justifies me in saying that I have known few men more disposed to cherish kindly and benevolent feelings to-

wards their fellow men than himself. He informs me that he will with pleasure admit a notice of the "Gentleman's Magazine" in the "Messenger," and if possible in the October number. He is apprehensive, however, that the "Fall of the House of Usher" would not only occupy more space than he can conveniently spare (the demands upon his columns being very great), but that the subject-matter is not such as would be acceptable to a large majority of his readers. He doubts whether the readers of the "Messenger" have much relish for tales of the German School, although written with great power and ability, and in this opinion I confess to you frankly I am strongly inclined to concur. I doubt very much whether tales of the wild, improbable, and terrible class can ever be permanently popular in this country. Charles Dickens, it appears to me, has given the final death-blow to writings of that description. Of course, there is nothing I could say on that subject which can or ought to influence your own mind. There is no disputing in matters of taste, and there is no infallible standard to which men consider themselves obliged to defer and surrender their own judgments.

It gives me sincere pleasure to understand that

your own good sense and the influence of high and noble motives have enabled you to overcome a seductive and dangerous treatment (?) which too often prostrates the wisest and best by its fatal grasp. The cultivation of such high intellectual powers as you possess cannot fail to earn for you a solid reputation in the literary world. In the department of criticism especially, I know few who can claim to be your superiors in this country. Your dissecting knife, if vigorously employed, would serve to rid us of much of that silly trash and silly *sentimentality* with which puerile and conceited authors and gain-seeking booksellers are continually poisoning our intellectual food. I hope in relation to all such you will continue to wield mace without "fear, favor, or affection."

I subscribe myself sincerely your well-wisher,
(Signature missing). [JAS. E. HEATH.] [1]

Philip Pendleton Cooke was another author whose opinion Poe sought similarly on "Ligeia":—

CHARLESTOWN, [VIRGINIA,] September 16, 1839.

MY DEAR SIR, — I received your friendly letter a long time ago but have scarcely been at

[1] Griswold MSS.

home since its receipt. My wife enticed me off to visit her kins-people in the country, and I saw more of guns and horses and dogs than of pens and paper. Amongst dinners, barbecues, snipe-shooting, riding parties, &c., I could not get my brains into the humour for writing to you or to anybody else. I reached home two days ago, and now "hasten slowly" to assure you of my undiminished regard and respect for you—and to tell you (as above) the reasons of my neglect in leaving yr. letter so long unanswered.

I do not believe you ingenuous or sincere when you speak in the terms which you use touching the value of my rambling compositions — my contributions to the "Messenger," &c.,—yet it of course cannot be disagreeable to me to find myself considered worth flattering. I will send you occasionally — if possible—such matters as I may consider worth inserting in the "Gentleman's Magazine" with pleasure; I cannot promise anything like the systematic contribution which I was guilty of in White's case, for the "madness of scribbling" which once itched and tickled at my fingers-ends has been considerably cured by a profession and matrimony—money-cares and domestic squabbles—buying beef and mutton, and curing my child's croups, colicks,

&c. The fever with which I was afflicted has given way to a chill — or, as romantic young persons say, "The golden dream is broken."

As to "Ligeia," of which you ask my opinion (doubtless without any intention of being guided by any person's but your own), I think it very fine. There is nothing *unintelligible* to my mind in the "sequel" (or conclusion), but I am impertinent enough to think that it (the conclusion) might be mended. I of course "took" your "idea" throughout. The whole piece is but a sermon from the text of "Joseph Glanvil" which you cap it with — and your intent is to tell a tale of the "mighty will" contending with and finally vanquishing Death. The struggle is vigorously described — and I appreciated every sentence as I advanced, until the Lady Ligeia takes possession of the deserted *quarters* (I write like a butcher) of the Lady Rowena. There I was shocked by a violation of the ghostly proprieties — so to speak — and wondered how the Lady Ligeia — a wandering essence — could, in quickening *the body of the Lady Rowena* (such is the idea) become suddenly the visible, bodily Ligeia. If Rowena's bodily form had been retained as a shell or case for the disembodied Lady Ligeia, and you had only become aware

PHILIP PENDLETON COOKE

gradually that the blue Saxon eye of the "Lady Rowena of Tremaine" grew daily darker with the peculiar, intense expression of the "look" which had belonged to Ligeia — that a mind of grander powers, a soul of more glowing fires occupied the quickened body and gave an old familiar expression to its motions — if you had brooded and meditated upon the change until proof accumulated upon proof, making wonder certainty, and then, in the moment of some strangest of all evidence of the transition, broken out into the exclamation which ends the story — the *effect* would not have been lessened, and the "ghostly proprieties" would, I think, have been better observed. You may have some theory of the story, or transition, however, which I have not caught.

As for your compositions of this class, generally, I consider them, as Mr. Crummles would say, "phenomenous." You *write* as I sometimes *dream* when asleep on a heavy supper (not heavy enough for nightmare). — The odd ignorance of the name, lineage, &c., of Ligeia — of the circumstances, place, &c., under which, and where, you first saw her — with which you begin your narrative, is usual, and not at all wondered at, in dreams. Such dimness of recollection does not

whilst we dream excite any surprise or diminish the *vraisemblable* aspect of the strange matters that we dream of. It is only when we wake that we wonder that so material an omission in the thread of the events should have been unnoticed by the mind at a time when it could dream in other respects so plausibly — with such detailed minuteness — with such self-possession.

But I must come to a conclusion, as I tire myself with this out-of-the-way sort of writing.

I will subscribe to the "Gentleman's Magazine" shortly and also "contribute" to it.

Yrs. sincerely,

P. P. COOKE.[1]

P. S. I would not say "*saith Lord Verulam*" — it is out of the way. I am very impertinent.

To this Poe immediately replied: —

PHILADELPHIA, September 21, 1839.

MY DEAR SIR, — I received your letter this morning — and read it with more pleasure than I can well express. You wrong me, indeed, in supposing that I meant one word of mere flattery in what I said. I have an inveterate habit of speaking the truth — and had I not valued your

[1] Griswold MSS.

opinion more highly than that of any man in America I should not have written you as I did.

I say that I read your letter with delight. In fact I am aware of no delight greater than that of feeling one's self appreciated (in such wild matters as "Ligeia") by those in whose judgment one has faith. You read my most intimate spirit "like a book," and with the single exception of D'Israeli I have had communication with no other person who does. Willis had a glimpse of it — Judge Tucker saw about one half way through — but your ideas are the very echo of my own. I am very far from meaning to flatter — I am flattered and honored. Beside me is now lying a letter from Washington Irving in which he speaks with enthusiasm of a late tale of mine, "The Fall of the House of Usher," — and in which he promises to make his opinion public, upon the first opportunity, — but from the bottom of my heart I assure you I regard his best word as but dust in the balance when weighed with those discriminating opinions of your own, which teach me that you feel and perceive.

Touching "Ligeia" you are right — all right — throughout. The *gradual* perception of the fact that Ligeia lives again in the person of Ro-

wena is a far loftier and more thrilling idea than the one I have embodied. It offers in my opinion the widest possible scope to the imagination — it might be rendered even sublime. And this idea was mine — had I never written before I should have adopted it — but then there is "Morella." Do you remember there the *gradual* conviction on the part of the parent that the spirit of the first Morella tenants the person of the second? It was necessary, since "Morella" was written, to modify "Ligeia." I was forced to be content with a sudden half-consciousness, on the part of the narrator, that Ligeia stood before him. One point I have not fully carried out — I should have intimated that the *will* did not perfect its intention — there should have been a relapse — a final one — and Ligeia (who had only succeeded in so much as to convey an idea of the truth to the narrator) should be at length entombed as Rowena — the bodily alterations having gradually faded away.

But since "Morella" is upon record I will suffer "Ligeia" to remain as it is. Your word that it is "intelligible" suffices — and your commentary sustains your word. As for the mob — let them talk on. I should be grieved if I thought they comprehended me here. The "saith Veru-

lam" shall be put right—your "impertinence" is quite pertinent.

I send the "Gentleman's Magazine" (July, August, September). Do not think of subscribing. The criticisms are not worth your notice. Of course I pay no attention to them — for there are two of us. It is not pleasant to be taxed with the twaddle of other people, or to let other people be taxed with ours. Therefore for the present I remain upon my oars — merely penning an occasional paragraph, without care. The critiques, such as they are, are all mine in the July number and all mine in the August and September with the exception of the three first in each — which are by Burton. As soon as Fate allows I will have a Magazine of my own — and will endeavor to kick up a dust. Do you ever see the "Pittsburg Examiner" (a New Monthly)? I wrote a Review of "Tortesa" at some length in the July number. In the October number of the "Gentleman's Magazine" I will have "William Wilson" from "The Gift" for 1840. This tale I think you will like — it is perhaps the best, although not the last, I have done. During the autumn I will publish all in two volumes — and now I have done with my egotism.

It makes me laugh to hear you speaking about

"romantic young persons" as of a race with whom, for the future, you have nothing to do. You need not attempt to shake off or to banter off Romance. It is an evil you will never get rid of to the end of your days. It is a part of yourself — a portion of your soul. Age will only mellow it a little, and give it a holier tone. I will give your contributions a hearty welcome, and the choicest position in the magazine.

Sincerely yours, EDGAR A. POE.[1]

Washington Irving also wrote a letter in acknowledgment of "William Wilson," which had followed the "House of Usher," as a means of introduction, and the substance of it, much altered and somewhat garbled, appeared in Poe's commendatory notices, and affords a striking instance of how he dealt with such correspondence.

NEWBURG, November 6, 1839.

DEAR SIR, — The magazine you were so kind as to send me, being directed to New York, instead of Tarrytown, did not reach me for some time. This, together with an unfortunate habit of procrastination, must plead my apology for the tardiness of my reply. I have read your little tale of "William Wilson" with much pleasure.

[1] Griswold MSS.

It is managed in a highly picturesque style, and the singular and mysterious interest is well sustained throughout. I repeat what I have said in regard to a previous production, which you did me the favor to send me, that I cannot but think a series of articles of like style and merit would be extremely well received by the public.

I could add for your private ear, that I think the last tale much the best, in regard to style. It is simpler. In your first you have been too anxious to present your picture vividly to the eye, or too distrustful of your effect, and have laid on too much coloring. It is erring on the best side — the side of luxuriance. That tale might be improved by relieving the style from some of the epithets. There is no danger of destroying its graphic effect, which is powerful.

With best wishes for your success, I am, my dear sir, yours respectfully,

WASHINGTON IRVING.[1]

The most intimate view of Poe, in this earlier period of his stay in Philadelphia, is contained in his correspondence[2] with Dr. J. E. Snodgrass,

[1] Griswold MSS.

[2] The Snodgrass Correspondence (partly published in the *New York Herald*, March 27, 1881), when not otherwise credited, is here given from a very careful MS. copy of the originals,

of Baltimore, who had been Brooks's associate on the "Museum," and was afterwards known as an early abolitionist in that city; and the letters as a whole offer an interesting illustration of the literary conditions of the time,—the magazine environment in which Poe's genius lived. They begin in the fall of this year, 1839, and require little comment:—

PHILADELPHIA, September 11, [1839].

MY DEAR SIR, — I have to thank you for your friendly attention in forwarding the "St. Louis Bulletin." I was the more gratified, as the reception of the paper convinced me that you, of whom I have always thought highly, had no share in the feelings of ill will towards me, which are somewhat prevalent (God only knows why) in Balt:

I should be very much pleased if you would write, and let me know the Balt. news — especially about yourself and Mr. Brooks, and the fate of the "Museum."

I have now a great favor to ask — and think that I may depend upon your friendship. It is to write a notice (such as you think rigidly just

made some years ago by Dr. William Hand Browne of Baltimore.

— no more) of the Sep: no. of the "Gent's Mag:" embodying in your article the passage concerning myself, from the "St. Louis Bulletin" — in any manner which your good taste may suggest. The critique when written might be handed to Neilson Poe. If you ask him to insert it editorially, it is possible he may do it — but, in fact, I have no great faith in him. If he refuses — then upon your stating the fact to Mr. Harker of the "Republican" you will secure its insertion there. If you will do me this great favor, depend upon any similar good offer [office?] from me "*upon demand.*"

I am about to publish my tales collectedly — and shall be happy to send you an early copy. I append the extract from the "Bulletin."

"The general tone and character of this work (the 'S. L. Messenger') impart lustre to our periodical literature; and we really congratulate its publisher upon the sound and steadfast popularity which it has acquired. Let it never be forgotten, however, that the first impetus to the favor of *literary men* which it received was given by the glowing pen of Edgar A. Poe, now assistant editor of 'Burton's Gentleman's Magazine,' and, although, since he has left it, it has well maintained its claims to respectability, yet there

are few writers in this country—take Neal, Irving, and Willis away and we would say none—who can compete successfully, in many respects, with Poe. With an acuteness of observation, a vigorous and effective style, and an independence that defies control, he writes with a fervid fancy and a most beautiful enthusiasm. His is a high destiny."

Will you be kind enough to drop me a line in reply?

Yours sincerely, EDGAR A. POE.

J. E. SNODGRASS, Esqr.

Did you see the "Weekly Messenger" (Alexander's), or Noah's "Evening Star"? They spoke highly of my tale, "The House of Usher,"—as also the "Pennsylvanian" and the "U. S. Gazette" of this city.

P. S. I have made a profitable engagement with "Blackwood's Mag:" and my forthcoming Tales are promised a very commendatory Review in that journal from the pen of Prof. Wilson. Keep this a secret, if you please, for the present.

Can you not send us something for the "Gent's Mag."?

Do you know anything of the "Pittsburg Literary Examiner"? I wrote for it a review of

Tortesa in its 3d no. — but have not yet recd. No. 4.

All the criticisms in the Mag: are mine, *with the exception of the 3 first.*

PHILADELPHIA, October 7, '39.

MY DEAR SIR, — I recd. your kind letter and now write a few hasty words in reply, merely to thank you for your exertions in my behalf, and to say that I send to-day, the Octo. No. We have been delayed with it for various reasons. . . . [The omitted passage refers to Neilson Poe.]

I sincerely thank you for the interest you have taken in my well-doing. The friendship of a man of talent, who is at the same time a man of honorable feeling, is especially valuable in these days of double-dealing. I hope I shall always deserve your good opinion.

In the Octo. no: all the criticisms are mine — also the gymnastic article.

My book will be out in the begg. of Novr

In haste, yours most truly,

EDGAR A. POE.

DR. J. E. SNODGRASS.

Have you any of the Nos of the "S. Lit. Messr" from No. 7, vol. 1, to No. 6, vol. 2? both inclusive, or do you know any one who has them?

[December 12, 1839.]

MY DEAR SIR, — I have the pleasure of sending you, through Messrs. Lea & Blanchard, a copy of my tales. Not knowing what better plan to pursue, I have addressed the package to you "at the office of the 'Baltimore American.'" Will you get it? In the same package is a copy for Mr. Carey of the 'American,' which I must beg you to deliver to him with my respects. I have not the pleasure of knowing him personally —but entertain a high opinion of his talents. Please write his full name in his copy — "with the author's respects" — as I forget his *praenomen*.

I do not believe that Lea & B. have sent any of the books to Baltimore as yet — will you be kind enough to forward me any Bal. papers which may contain notices.

Very truly your friend,

EDGAR A. POE.

DR. J. EVANS SNODGRASS,

PHILADELPHIA, 12, 1839.

[Postmarked December 13.]

The two volumes referred to were issued at the end of the year under the title, "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque,"[1] suggested by an

[1] *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque.* By Edgar A. Poe. In two volumes. Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard. 1840. 16mo.

article [1] of Sir Walter Scott, acquaintance with which is also shown by some phrases of the preface and by the traits of the castle in "The Fall of the House of Usher," clearly derived from Scott's description of the castle in Hoffmann's *Das Majorat.* The preface minimizes the charge of "Germanism" so often brought against Poe, and denies its justice except so far as it describes one vein of contemporary magazine taste and is included in the universal subject of terror which is "not of Germany, but of the soul." The use of the phrase "phantasy-pieces" also indicates the quality of Poe's acquaintance with German romance, and suggests the mediation of Carlyle as one of the magazine writers who made him acquainted with it. Poe states also that his tales

The work was copyrighted in 1839, and was dedicated to Colonel William Drayton. Vol. i (pp. 243) contained a preface and fourteen tales, that is, *Morella, Lionizing, William Wilson, The Man that was Used Up, The Fall of the House of Usher, The Duc de L'Omelette, MS. Found in a Bottle, Bon-Bon, Shadow, The Devil in the Belfry, Ligeia, King Pest, The Signora Zenobia* (*How to write a Blackwood Article*), *The Scythe of Time* (*A Predicament*). Vol ii (pp. 228) contained *Epimanes, Siope, Hans Pfaall, A Tale of Jerusalem, Von Jung, Loss of Breath, Metzengerstein, Berenice, Why the Little Frenchman wears his Hand in a Sling, The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion.* Appendix.

[1] *Foreign Quarterly Review,* July, 1827.

hitherto had been written with a view to their issue in a collected form, and hence with an endeavor "to preserve, as far as a certain point, a certain unity of design." The collection is therefore to be regarded as an expansion of "The Tales of the Folio Club," in which such an idea was involved in the title, and defined by the suppressed introduction.

The new publication included all the tales thus far mentioned, and in addition the grotesque "Why the Little Frenchman wears his Hand in a Sling," making twenty-five in all. The publishers, Lea & Blanchard, with whom, under the name of Carey & Lea, he had previously had correspondence in 1834–37 in regard to the "Tales of the Folio Club," engaged, September 28, 1839, to print an edition of seven hundred and fifty copies, on condition that Poe should have the copyright and a few copies (afterwards limited to twenty) for distribution among his friends, and they should have the profits. When the volume was nearly ready Poe endeavored to obtain better terms, and in reply received the following letter, which may account for his professed indifference at a later time regarding the fate of the tales: —

November 20, 1839.

EDGAR A. POE, — We have your note of to-day. The copyright of the Tales would be of no value to us; when we undertook their publication, it was solely to oblige you and not with any view to profit, and on this ground it was urged by you. We should not therefore be now called upon or expected to purchase the copyright when we have no expectation of realizing the Capital placed in the volumes. If the offer to publish was now before us we should certainly decline it, and would feel obliged if you knew and would urge some one to relieve us from the publication at cost, or even at a small abatement.[1]

The volumes appeared early in December, and were widely and favorably noticed by the city press and in New York. The sale, however, was not large, and after Poe's own copies were dispatched he broke off intercourse with the firm for some time.

Three of these reprinted stories deserve some further notice. Two of them, "Ligeia" and "The Fall of the House of Usher," mark the highest reach of the romantic element in Poe's genius, and for the first time exhibit his artistic

[1] Letter-Book of Lea & Blanchard.

powers in full development and under easy command. He had matured in the six years since he printed his first story (he was now thirty), but his growth had been within singularly well-defined limits; his mind pursued the strong attraction that fascinated him in that haunted borderland upon the verge but not beyond the sphere of credibility, as the magnet obeys the pole; but this absorption of his imagination in the preternatural was not more extraordinary than the monotony of the themes that exercised it. In plot "Ligeia" is the same as "Morella," and "The Fall of the House of Usher" the same as "Berenice"; in each a single dramatic event had gathered about it in Poe's mind rich accretions of fancy, thought, and suggestiveness, but practically there was no change except in treatment, — in the art by which the effect originally sought was secured more finely, and in an intenser and more elemental form. In all his best work, however, Poe not only told a story, he also developed an idea, and his later renderings of early conceptions are markedly characterized by an increase in this suggested, or, as he designated it, mystic meaning.

In "Ligeia," which he regarded as his finest tale, he rewrote "Morella," but for much of its

LIGEIA

peculiar power he went back to the sources of his youngest inspiration. In "Al Aaraaf" he had framed out of the breath of the night-wind and the idea of the harmony of universal nature a fairy creature, —

> "Ligeia, Ligeia, my beautiful one!"

Now by a finer touch he incarnated the motions of the breeze and the musical voices of nature in the form of a woman: but the Lady Ligeia has still no human quality; her aspirations, her thoughts and capabilities, are those of a spirit; the very beam and glitter and silence of her ineffable eyes belong to the visionary world. She is, in fact, the maiden of Poe's dream, the Eidolon he served, the air-woven divinity in which he believed; for he had the true myth-making faculty, the power to make his senses aver what his imagination perceived. In revealing through "Ligeia" the awful might of the soul in the victory of its will over death and in the eternity of its love, Poe worked in the very element of his reverie, in the liberty of a world as he would have it. Upon this story he lavished all his poetic, inventive, and literary skill, and at last perfected an exquisitely conceived work, and made it, within its own laws, as faultless as humanity can fashion. He did not once lapse into the crude

or repulsive; he blended the material elements of the legend, the mere circumstance and decoration of the scene, like married notes of a sensuous accompaniment, and modulated them with minute and delicate care to chime with the weird suggestions of the things above nature, until all unites and vanishes in an impression on the spirit, — in an intimation of the dark possibilities that lie hidden in the eternal secret, adumbrated in the startling event when the raven hair of Ligeia streams down beneath the serpentine flames of the writhing censer, and her eyes open full on her lost lover, as they stand embosomed within the wind-swayed golden hangings whereon the ghastly and sable phantasmagoria keeps up its antic and ceaseless dance. Without striving to unwind the mazes of the spell that confuses the reader into momentary belief in the incredible, one cannot but note the marvelous certainty with which Poe passes from vaguely suggestive and slightly unusual mutations of the senses, and advances by imperceptible gradations to accustom the mind to increasingly strange and complex changes, incessant and seemingly lawless variations, until one is fairly bewildered into accepting the final impossible transformation of the immortal into mor-

tality as merely the final phase of the restless movement in all, and afterwards, on returning to the solid world, can scarcely tell where he overstepped the boundaries of reality.

As in "Ligeia" the idea of change is elaborated, so in "The Fall of the House of Usher" the intellectual theme is fear. For the purposes of this story Poe used again the plot of "Berenice," but so purified and developed in its accidents as to be hardly recognizable. Not a few would rank this tale more high than "Ligeia"; for, if that be more distinguished by ideality, this is more excellent in the second virtue in Poe's scale, unity of design. In artistic construction it does not come short of absolute perfection. The adaptation of the related parts and their union in the total effect are a triumph of literary craft; the intricate details, as it were mellowing and reflecting one ground tone, have the definiteness and precision of inlaid mosaic, or, like premonitions and echoes of the theme in music, they are so exactly calculated as to secure their end with the certainty of harmonic law itself. The sombre landscape whose hues Poe alone knew the secret of; the subtle yet not overwrought sympathy between the mansion and the race that had reared it; the looks, traits, and pur-

suits of Usher, its representative; and the at first scarce-felt presence of Madeline, his worn sister, — all is like a narrowing and ever-intensifying force drawing in to some unknown point; and when this is reached, in the bright copper-sheathed vault in which Madeline is entombed, and the mind, after that midnight scene, expands and breathes freer air, a hundred obscure intimations, each slight in itself, startle and enchain it, until, slowly as obscurity takes shape in a glimmer of light, Usher's dread discloses itself in its concrete and fearful fulfillment, and at once, by the brief and sudden stroke of death, house, race, and all sink into the black tarn where its glassy image had so long built a shadowy reality.

Where every syllable tells, it is folly to attempt an analysis of the workmanship. By way of illustration, however, it may be well to remark on the mode in which the mind is prepared for the coming of Madeline, and made almost to share Usher's diseased acuteness of hearing, by the legendary tale, with its powerful and exclusive appeal to the senses; or to observe such a slight touch as the small picture painted by Usher, — the interior of a long rectangular tunnel, deep in the earth, with low, smooth walls,

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER

closed and without a torch, yet flooded with intense rays, — so clearly prophetic of Madeline's vault, gleaming with metallic lustre, of which, too, some reminiscence still survives in the mind when the same unnatural luminous exhalation glows from the under-surface of the storm clouds that press upon the turrets of the trembling house before its fall. Never has the impression of total destruction, of absolute and irremediable ruin, been more strongly given; had the mansion remained, it would seem as if the extinction of Usher had been incomplete. Doom rests upon all things within the shadow of those walls; it is felt to be impending: and therefore, Poe, identifying himself with his reader, places the sure seal of truth on the illusion as he exclaims, "From that chamber and from that mansion I fled aghast." The mind is already upon the recoil as it turns to view the accomplished fatality.

These two tales deserve more attention in that they are in Poe's prose what "The Raven" and "Ulalume" are in his poetry, the richest of his imaginative work. On them he expended his spirit. There had been no such art before in America; but, like Hawthorne, he had to wait for any adequate recognition of his genius. His

work in this kind was done; it could be left, safe as the diamond.

In "William Wilson" he opened a new vein. It is the first of his studies of the springs of terror in conscience. The idea itself which is developed in the story, the conception of a double dogging one's steps and thwarting one's evil designs, is an old fancy[1] of men that has taken many shapes since Zoroaster saw his phantom in the garden. The psychological element in it is less insisted on than is usual in Poe's finest work, and it consequently lacks the intensity and spiritual power of his later sketches on similar subjects. It has a peculiar interest as containing an autobiographi-

[1] It has been suggested (Ingram and Stoddard) that this tale was from a rare drama by Calderon, *El Embozado* or *El Capotado*, mentioned by Medwin to Irving, and vainly sought for by the latter in Spanish libraries. (*Irving's Life and Letters*, ii, 232; iv, 70–72.) Medwin undoubtedly had the plot from Shelley. The reference is plainly to *El Purgatorio de San Patricio*, a favorite of Shelley's (from which he took a passage of *The Cenci*), in which Un Hombre Embozado is a character. Poe read Medwin's *Shelley;* but it is extremely unlikely that he ever saw the drama in question, nor is there any reason to seek so far for his knowledge of a superstitious idea common to literature. The immediate source has also been sought in Hoffmann's *Elixiere des Teufels*. *The Influence of E. T. A. Hoffmann on the Tales of Edgar Allan Poe*, by Palmer Cobb, Chapel Hill, the University Press, 1908; this, indirectly, through *Blackwoods*, July, 1824, is probable.

cal account of his school-days in England, but in his own life there was little to serve as a basis for other portions of the narrative.

Poe had from the first formed the habit, which no author ever practiced so flagrantly, of republishing old material slightly if at all revised. With the exception of the fine sonnet entitled "Silence," all his poetic contributions to "Burton's" were of this sort; the 1829 edition of his poems afforded "Spirits of the Dead,"[1] "Fairyland,"[2] and "To the River ——,"[2] and the "Messenger" yielded "To Ianthe in Heaven" and "To ——,"[1] the stanzas originally addressed to Eliza White. At the beginning of the New Year he applied the same convenient aid to the department of criticism, which had hitherto been very feebly conducted, although he had found opportunity to reproach Longfellow for using so crudely, in "Hyperion," material capable of being highly wrought by art, and had praised Fouqué's "Undine" with delightful appreciation. In the January issue Moore's "Alciphron" drew from him one of those partial reviews that seem to invalidate the usefulness of any criticism of contemporaries, and in piecing it out he availed himself of his former remarks

[1] Unsigned. [2] Signed "P."

on Drake and Marvell in the "Messenger," but openly under the form of self-quotation. In a mediocre notice of Bryant, somewhat later, he again had recourse to the old files, and in other insignificant criticisms he is found airing the Hebrew learning of his article in the "New York Review," and even enumerating once more the storehouses of literary odds and ends, including the mythical memoirs of "Suard and André." The most noticeable article is that review of Longfellow's "Voices of the Night" in which he first urged against the New England poet the charge of plagiarism. He instanced in particular Tennyson's "The Death of the Old Year" as the source of "The Midnight Mass for the Dying Year." This he characterized as belonging "to the most barbarous class of literary robbery; that class in which, while the words of the wronged author are avoided, his most intangible, and therefore his least defensible and least reclaimable property, is purloined."[1] In other ways than such book-reviewing as this Poe's mind was also unprofitably employed. A satirical sketch, "Peter Pendulum, the Business Man," in February, and the first of his articles

[1] *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*, vi, 102–103 (February, 1840).

respecting decoration, "The Philosophy of Furniture," in May, were his only signed contributions, for the mere plate or sporting articles may be neglected.

In each number, however, from January to June, appeared an installment of his anonymous work, "The Journal of Julius Rodman, Being an Account of the First Passage across the Rocky Mountains of North America ever achieved by Civilized Man." This narrative is constructed, like that of "Arthur Gordon Pym," so as to win credence by circumstantial detail and an affected air of plainness, and Poe would probably have concluded it similarly with weird marvels of nature. Julius Rodman was the son of an Englishman who had settled in Kentucky. Being left alone by his father's death, he started in his twenty-sixth year professedly on a trapping expedition up the Missouri River, and pushing on for mere adventure crossed the Rocky Mountains in northern regions in 1792, but on returning to Virginia, after three years' absence, never conversed respecting his journey, and took great pains to secrete his diary. Unfortunately, although the characters of the exploring party are much more carefully selected than was the case in "Arthur Gordon Pym," Poe conducted the

travelers only to the head waters of the Missouri. The description of the trip, in which he followed very closely the obvious authorities, such as Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Lewis and Clark, Pike, and Irving, is enlivened only by an attack on the Sioux, the sight of a beaver dam, and a hand-to-hand conflict with a bear. As before, too, he was led to his subject by the public interest which was now especially directed to the exploration of the West. The work as a whole bears no relation to his genius, except in a single passage which contains a faint suggestion of the Valley of the Many-Colored Grass in "Eleonora."

With the June installment of the "Journal" Poe's contributions to the magazine ceased, and at the same time his engagement with Burton abruptly terminated. There was evidently a serious quarrel between the two editors. Poe asserted that Burton had acted dishonorably in advertising prizes for contributions, which he never intended to pay, and that this was the ground of his own resignation; Burton, on his side, circulated scandalous reports in regard to Poe's habits and actions, and described these as the cause of the trouble, and said publicly on the cover of "The Gentleman's Magazine" for September, 1840: "Our friend at Portland may

rest assured that we were ignorant of the non-transmission of his numbers. His name was erased from our list by the person whose 'infirmities' have caused us much annoyance." The correspondence with Snodgrass throws light upon the subject. In reply to a question regarding the prizes offered by Burton, Poe wrote as follows: —

PHILADELPHIA, December 19, 1839.

MY DEAR SNODGRASS, — I presume that upon the 16th (the date of postmark of your last letter) you received my own, dated 2 days before, in which I mentioned having forwarded 2 copies of the "Grotesque & Arab:" one for yourself and one for Mr. Carey. You will therefore, ere this, have acquitted me of forgetfulness or neglect.

Touching the Premiums. The Advertisement respecting them was written by Mr. Burton, and is not I think as explicit as might [be.] I can give you no information about their *desig*[nation furth]er than is shown in the advertisement itself. The tr[uth is,] I object, in toto, to the whole scheme — but merely follow[ed in] Mr. B.'s wake upon such matters of business.[1]

[1] Words in brackets undecipherable owing to the state of the MSS.

Either of your projected Essays would be (as you would do it) a good thing — either that upon American Literature, or upon the Hints of Science as connected with every-day Life. The latter would, of course, be entirely remodelled so as to look *new*.

I am sorry to say that I have been unable to get the "Scenes of Childhood," in the January number, which is now ready, — but it shall appear in our next. If you look over our columns you will see that we only put in poetry in the odds and ends of our pages — that is, to fill out a vacancy left at the foot of a prose article — so that the length of a poem often determines its insertion. Yours could not be bro't *to fit* in and was obliged to be left out.

If you see any of the Bal. papers notice my Tales, will you try and forward them, especially the weeklies, which I never see.

The Philadelphians have given me the *very highest possible* praise — I c'd desire nothing further. Have you seen the "U. S. Gazette," the "Pennsylvanian," or Alexander's "Messenger"? In the last is a notice by Professor Frost, which I forward you, to-day, with this. The books have just reached New York. The "Star" and the "Evening Post" have both capital notices.

There is also a promise of one in the "New World" — Benjamin's Paper — which I am anxious to see — for praise or for blame. I have a high op[inion of] that man's ability.

Do not forget to forward [me] the notices if any appear.

Believe me I am truly yours,

EDGAR A. POE.

Write soon.

P. S. None of my books have been sent to Richmond as yet — for I am happy to say that the edition is already very nearly exhausted.

PHILADELPHIA, January 21, 1840.

MY DEAR SIR, — I seize the opportunity afforded me by a temporary lull in a storm of business to write you a few hurried words. Your last letter is not before me — but I refer to it in memory. I received the poem through Godey, and retain it as you desire. The "Scenes of Childhood" is in type for the Feb. no: Mr. Carey's book has not yet reached me. My own was forwarded by L. & Blanchard to Joseph Robinson — so they assure me. I presume you have it before this.

I am obliged to decline saying anything of the "Museum" in the "Gent's Mag:" however

much I feel anxious to oblige yourself, and to express my own views. You will understand me when I say that I have no proprietary interest in the Mag: and that Mr. Burton is a warm friend of Brooks — *verb. sap. sat.*

I have heard, indirectly, that an attempt is to be made by some one of capital in Baltimore to get up a Magazine. Have you heard anything of it? If you have, will you be kind enough to let me know all about it by *return of mail* — if you can spend the time to oblige me. I am particularly desirous of understanding how the matter stands — who are the parties, &c.

Excuse the abruptness of this letter, &

believe me very truly yours,

EDGAR A. POE.

The first reference to the breach by Burton is contained in an undated letter from him to Poe: —

"I am sorry you have thought it necessary to send me such a letter. Your troubles have given a morbid tone to your feelings which it is your duty to discourage. I myself have been as severely handled by the world as you can possibly have been, but my sufferings have not tinged my mind with melancholy, nor jaundiced my

WILLIAM BURTON

views of society. You must rouse your energies, and if care assail you, conquer it. I will gladly overlook the past. I hope you will as easily fulfil your pledges for the future. We shall agree very well, though I cannot permit the magazine to be made a vehicle for that sort of severity which you think 'so successful with the mob.' I am truly much less anxious about making a monthly 'sensation' than I am upon the point of fairness. You must, my dear sir, get rid of your avowed ill-feelings toward your brother authors. You see I speak plainly; I cannot do otherwise upon such a subject. You say the people love havoc. I think they love justice. I think you yourself would not have written the article on Dawes, in a more healthy state of mind. I am not trammelled by any vulgar consideration of expediency; I would rather lose money than by such undue severity wound the feelings of a kind-hearted and honorable man. And I am satisfied that Dawes has something of the true fire in him. I regretted your word-catching spirit. But I wander from my design. I accept your proposition to recommence your interrupted avocations upon the *Maga*. Let us meet as if we had not exchanged letters. Use more exercise, write when feelings prompt, and be assured of my

friendship. You will soon regain a healthy activity of mind, and laugh at your past vagaries."[1]

Poe seems to have returned. The final break is described by Mr. Rosenbach, a companion of Poe. He says that Burton, having an engagement to play in New York, left the magazine in the associate editor's hands, and on returning found that nothing had been done, and he continues: "Burton immediately sought my father at his house, and it was about midnight when he found him. He came in a carriage with a large bundle of manuscripts, from which they made some selection. They worked until morning, when they sent me with copy to the printer, Charles Alexander, in Franklin Place, Chestnut Street. Alexander hunted up some extra compositors, and by dint of hard work and hurried proof-reading, the 'Gentleman's Magazine' appeared as usual. Poe was discharged for his negligence."[2]

Poe wrote to Burton as follows:—

SIR, — I find myself at leisure this Monday morning, June 1, to notice your very singular letter of Saturday. . . . I have followed the example of Victorine and slept upon the matter,

[1] Griswold, xxxii. [2] *The American*, February 26, 1887.

and you shall now hear what I have to say. In the first place, your attempts to bully me excite in my mind scarcely any other sentiment than mirth. When you address me again, preserve, if you can, the dignity of a gentleman. . . . I shall feel myself more at liberty to be explicit. As for the rest, you do me gross injustice; and you know it. As usual, you have wrought yourself into a passion with me on account of some imaginary wrong; for no real injury, or attempt at injury, have you ever received at my hands. As I live, I am utterly unable to say why you are angry, or what true grounds of complaint you have against me. You are a man of impulses; have made yourself, in consequence, some enemies; have been in many respects ill-treated by those whom you had looked upon as friends — and these things have rendered you suspicious. You once wrote in your magazine a sharp critique upon a book of mine — a very silly book — Pym. Had I written a similar criticism upon a book of yours, you feel that you would have been my enemy for life, and you therefore imagine in my bosom a latent hostility towards yourself. This has been a mainspring in your whole conduct towards me since our first acquaintance. It has acted to prevent all cordiality.

In a general view of human nature your idea is just — but you will find yourself puzzled in judging me by ordinary motives. Your criticism was essentially correct, and therefore, although severe, it did not occasion in me one solitary emotion either of anger or dislike. But even while I write these words, I am sure you will not believe them. Did I not still think you, in spite of the exceeding littleness of some of your hurried actions, a man of many honorable impulses, I should not now take the trouble to send you this letter. I cannot permit myself to suppose that you would say to me in cool blood what you said in your letter of yesterday. You are, of course, only mistaken in asserting that I owe you a hundred dollars, and you will rectify the mistake at once when you come to look at your accounts.

Soon after I joined you, you made me an offer of money, and I accepted $20. Upon another occasion, at my request, you sent me enclosed in a letter $30. Of this 30, I repaid 20 within the next fortnight (drawing no salary for that period). I was thus still in your debt $30, when not long ago I again asked a loan of $30, which you promptly handed to me at your own home. Within the last three weeks, three dollars each week have been retained from my salary, an

indignity which I have felt deeply but did not resent. You state the sum retained as $8, but this I believe is through a mistake of Mr. Morrell. My postage bill, at a guess, might be $9 or $10 — and I therefore am indebted to you, upon the whole, in the amount of about $60. More than this sum I shall not pay. You state that you can no longer afford to pay $50 per month for 2 or 3 pp. of MS. Your error here can be shown by reference to the Magazine. During my year with you I have written —

In July	5	pp	
" August	9	"	
" Sept.	16	"	
" Oct.	4	"	
" Nov.	5	"	
" Dec.	12	"	
" Jan.	9	"	
" Feb.	12	"	
" March	11	"	
" April	17	"	
" May	14	"	+5 copied — Miss McMichael's MS.
" June	9	"	+ 3 copied — Chandlers.
	132	[*sic*]	

Dividing this sum by 12, we have an average of 11 pp. per month — not 2 or 3. And this

estimate leaves out of question everything in the way of extract or compilation. Nothing is counted but *bona fide* composition. 11 pp. at $3 per p. would be $33, at the usual Magazine prices. Deduct this from $50, my monthly salary, and we have left $17 per month, or 4\frac{25}{100}$ per week, for the services of proof-reading; general superintendence at the printing office; reading, alteration, and preparation of MSS., with compilation of various articles, such as Plate articles, Field sports, &c. Neither has anything been said of my name upon your title-page, a small item — you will say — but still something, as you know. Snowden pays his editresses $2 per week each for their names *solely*. Upon the whole, I am not willing to admit that you have greatly overpaid me. That I did not do four times as much as I did for the Magazine was your own fault. At first I wrote long articles, which you deemed inadmissible, and never did I suggest any to which you had not some immediate and decided objection. Of course I grew discouraged, and could feel no interest in the journal.

I am at a loss to know why you call me selfish. If you mean that I borrowed money of you — you know that you offered it, and you know that I am poor. In what instance has any one ever

found me selfish? Was there selfishness in the affront I offered Benjamin (whom I respect, and who spoke well of me) because I deemed it a duty not to receive from any one commendation at your expense? . . . I have said that I could not tell why you were angry. Place yourself in my situation and see whether you would not have acted as I have done. You first "enforced," as you say, a deduction of salary: giving me to understand thereby that you thought of parting company. You next spoke disrespectfully of me behind my back — this as an habitual thing — to those whom you supposed your friends, and who punctually retailed me, as a matter of course, every ill-natured word which you uttered. Lastly, you advertised your magazine for sale without saying a word to me about it. I felt no anger at what you did — none in the world. Had I not firmly believed it your design to give up your journal, with a view of attending to the Theatre, I should never have dreamed of attempting one of my own. The opportunity of doing something for myself seemed a good one — (and I was about to be thrown out of business) — and I embraced it. Now I ask you, as a man of honor and as a man of sense — what is there wrong in all this? What have I done at which

you have any right to take offence? I can give you no definitive answer (respecting the continuation of "Rodman's Journal") until I hear from you again. The charge of $100 I shall not admit for an instant. If you persist in it our intercourse is at an end, and we can each adopt our own measures. In the meantime, I am,

Yr. Obt. St.,

EDGAR A. POE.[1]

WM. E. BURTON, Esq.

This letter seems meant to be conciliatory, but if Poe's later characterization of his old chief is any sign, it failed of its purpose. Burton suppressed six or seven criticisms still on hand, and wrote and spoke hard words about his former associate. Nor did Poe lag much behind in returning ill-will. He wrote to Snodgrass with regard to a contribution which he had difficulty in recovering from the magazine: —

PHILADELPHIA, June 17,

MY DEAR SNODGRASS, — Yours of the 12 was duly received but I have found it impossible to answer it before, owing to an unusual press of business which has positively not left me a moment to myself. Touching your Essay, Burton

[1] Poe to Burton, Ingram, i, 175–179.

not only *lies*, but deliberately and wilfully lies; for the last time but one that I saw him I called his attention to the MS. which was then at the top of a pile of other MSS. sent for premiums, in a drawer of the office desk. The last day I was in the office I saw the Essay in the same position, and am perfectly sure it is there still. You know it is a peculiar looking MS. and I could not mistake it. In saying it was not in his possession his sole design was to vex you, and through you myself. Were I in your place I would take some summary method of dealing with the scoundrel, whose infamous line of conduct in regard to this whole Premium scheme merits, and shall receive exposure. I am firmly convinced that it was never his intention to pay one dollar of the money offered; and indeed his plain intimations to that effect, made to me personally and sincerely, were the immediate reason of my cutting the connexion so abruptly as I did. If you could, in any way, spare the time to come on to Philadelphia, I think I could put you in the way of detecting the villain in his rascality. I would go down with you to the office, open the drawer in his presence, and take the MS. from beneath his very nose. I think this would be a good deed done, and would act as a caution to such literary

swindlers in future. What think you of this plan? Will you come on? Write immediately — in reply.

Mr. Carey's book on slavery was received by me not long ago, and in last month's number I wrote, at some length, a criticism upon it, in which I endeavored to do justice to the author, whose talents I highly admire. But this critique, as well as some six or seven others, were refused admittance into the magazine by Mr. Burton, upon his receiving my letter of resignation. I allude[1] to the number for June — the one last issued. I fancy, moreover, that he has some private pique against Mr. Carey (as he has against every honest man), for not long ago he refused admission to a poetical address of his which I was anxious to publish.

Herewith you have my Prospectus. You will see that I have given myself sufficient time for preparation. I have every hope of success. As yet I have done nothing more than send a few Prospectuses to the Philadelphia editors, as it is rather early to strike — six months in anticipation. My object at present is merely to call attention to the contemplated design. In the mean time be assured that I am not idle — and

[1] "I allude" — almost illegible in original MS.

that if there is any impossibility about the matter it is the impossibility of *not* succeeding. The world is fond of novelty, and in being absolutely *honest*, I shall be utterly novel.

If you would show the Prospectus to Mr. Carey, or any other editorial friend, when you have done with it, I would be obliged to you.

Touching my tales, you will scarcely believe me when I tell you that I am ignorant of their fate, have never spoken to the publishers concerning them since the day of their issue. I have cause to think, however, that the edition was exhausted almost immediately. It was only six weeks since that I had the opportunity I wished of sending a copy to Professor Wilson, so as to be sure of its reaching him directly. Of course I must wait some time yet for a notice, — if any there is to be. Yours most truly,

E. A. Poe.

P. S. If you would enclose me Burton's letter to yourself, I will take it as an especial favor.

Dr. Snodgrass, however, heard at second hand the account given by Burton, and nearly nine months later wrote about it to Poe, who was then editor of "Graham's." The reply is at length and explicit: —

PHILADELPHIA, April 1, 1841.

MY DEAR SNODGRASS, — I fear you have been thinking it was not my design to answer your kind letter at all. It is now April Fool's Day, and yours is dated March 8th; but believe me, although, for good reason, I may occasionally postpone my reply to your favors, I am never in danger of forgetting them.

. . . . . .

In regard to Burton. I feel indebted to you for the kind interest you express; but scarcely know how to reply. My situation is embarrassing. It is impossible, as you say, to notice a buffoon and a felon, as one gentleman would notice another. The law, then, is my only resource. Now, if the truth of a scandal could be admitted in justification — I mean of what the law terms a *scandal* — I would have matters all my own way. I would institute a suit, forthwith, for his personal defamation of myself. He would be unable to prove the truth of his allegations. I could prove their falsity and their malicious intent by witnesses who, seeing me at all hours of every day, would have the best right to speak — I mean Burton's own clerk, Morrell, and the compositors of the printing office. In fact, I could prove the scandal almost by acclamation. I should ob-

tain damages. But, on the other hand, I have never been scrupulous in regard to what I have said of him. I have always told *him* to his face, and everybody else, that I looked upon him as a blackguard and a villain. This is notorious. He would meet me with a cross action. The truth of the allegation — which I could [as] easily prove as he would find it difficult to prove the truth of his own respecting me — would not avail me. The law will not admit, as justification of my calling Billy Burton a scoundrel, that Billy Burton is really such. What then can I do? If I sue, he sues: you see how it is.

At the same time — as I may, after further reflection, be induced to sue, I would take it as an act of kindness — not to say *justice* — on your part, if you would see the gentleman of whom you spoke, and ascertain with accuracy all that may legally avail me; that is to say, what and when were the words used, and whether your friend would be willing for your sake, for my sake, and for the sake of truth, to give evidence if called upon. Will you do this for me?

So far for the matter inasmuch as it concerns Burton. I have now to thank you for your defence of myself, as stated. You are a physician, and I presume no physician can have difficulty

in detecting the *drunkard* at a glance. You are, moreover, a literary man, well read in morals. You will never be brought to believe that I could write what I daily write, *as* I write it, were I as this villain would induce those who know me not, to believe. In fine, I pledge you, before God, the solemn word of a gentleman, that I am temperate even to rigor. From the hour in which I first saw this basest of calumniators to the hour in which I retired from his office in uncontrollable disgust at his chicanery, arrogance, ignorance, and brutality, *nothing stronger than water ever passed my lips.*

It is, however, due to candor that I inform you upon what foundation he has erected his slanders. At no period of my life was I ever what men call intemperate. I never was in the *habit* of intoxication. I never drunk drams, &c. But, for a brief period, while I resided in Richmond and edited the "Messenger" I certainly did give way, at long intervals, to the temptation held out on all sides by the spirit of Southern conviviality. My sensitive temperament could not stand an excitement which was an every-day matter to my companions. In short, it sometimes happened that I was completely intoxicated. For some days after each excess I was invariably confined

to bed. But it is now quite four years since I have abandoned every kind of alcoholic drink — four years, with the exception of a single deviation, which occurred shortly *after* my leaving Burton, and when I was induced to resort to the occasional use of *cider*, with the hope of relieving a nervous attack.

You will thus see, frankly stated, the whole amount of my sin. You will also see the blackness of that heart which could *revive* a slander of this nature. Neither can you fail to perceive how desperate the malignity of the slanderer must be — how resolute he must be to slander, and how slight the grounds upon which he would build up a defamation — since he can find nothing better with which to charge me than an accusation which can be disproved by each and every man with whom I am in the habit of daily intercourse.

I have now only to repeat to you, in general, my solemn assurance that my habits are as far removed from intemperance as the day from the night. My sole drink is water.

Will you do me the kindness to repeat this assurance to such of your own friends as happen to speak of me in your hearing?

I feel that nothing more is requisite, and you will agree with me upon reflection.

Hoping soon to hear from you, I am,
Yours most cordially,
EDGAR A. POE.[1]

DR. J. E. SNODGRASS.

There is another witness, Mr. C. W. Alexander, the publisher of the magazine, who wrote to Mr. T. C. Clarke, of Philadelphia, in answer to the question whether Poe's alleged irregularities at that time were such as to interfere with his work. He says: —

"The absence of the principal editor on professional duties left the matter frequently in the hands of Mr. Poe, whose unfortunate failing may have occasioned some disappointment in the preparation of a particular article expected from *him*, but never interfering with the regular publication of the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' as its monthly issue was never interrupted upon any occasion, either from Mr. Poe's deficiency, or from any other cause, during my publication of it, embracing the whole time of Mr. Poe's connection with it. That Mr. Poe had faults seriously detrimental to his own interests, none, of course, will deny. They were, unfortunately, too well known in the literary circles of Philadel-

[1] Poe to Snodgrass, *Baltimore American*, April, 1881.

phia, were there any disposition to conceal them. But he alone was the sufferer, and not those who received the benefit of his preëminent talents, however irregular his habits or uncertain his contributions may occasionally have been." [1]

It is possible that Mr. Alexander, writing ten years after the event, may have confused his recollections and antedated the intemperance of Poe, which became frequent and notorious during the next year. Were it not for this letter there would be little evidence beside Rosenbach's that Poe was not, as he claimed to be, a sober man from the time he left Richmond to that of his wife's illness in 1841, and this would agree with Gowan's account of him in New York and with Mrs. Clemm's statement, reported by Mr. R. E. Shapley, of Philadelphia,—"For years I know he did not taste even a glass of wine." To no other period of his mature life are these words applicable. It should be noted, too, that Wilmer, who sometimes met him in Philadelphia, says that during their acquaintance he "did not see him inebriated; no, not in a single instance;" [2] but in his "Recollections" he asserts unqualifiedly that this fault was the cause of all of Poe's differences with his employers.

[1] Alexander to Clarke, October 20, 1850, Gill, p. 97.

[2] *Our Press Gang*, p. 284.

The true cause of the trouble was probably mixed, and involved both Poe's temperament and his acts; it was partly of a business nature, and in the affair each party seems to have had matter for complaint. Burton, who it will be remembered was a comic actor, had got into quarrels with the managers, and he determined to have a theatre of his own; to obtain this he needed funds, and by way of raising them he advertised his magazine for sale without mentioning his intention to Poe. The latter, on his part, arranged to issue a prospectus of a new and rival monthly, "The Penn Magazine," without advising Burton. It was his old ambition. In fact, he was always waiting to find some one with capital to embark in the enterprise, and while still on Burton's was discontented through the indulgence of this hope, which he had mentioned in his letter to Cooke nine months before. He might fairly expect that in the changes about to take place, on the sale of the magazine, some of the subscribers to the "Gentleman's" would remain with him, who, as its literary editor, had won position and respect, especially with the press of the city, and that they would form a nucleus for the circulation of the "Penn." Whether in fact he did, as was charged by Gris-

wold, obtain transcripts of Burton's subscription-list and other valuable papers, for his own use, remains in doubt. It was an obvious thing for him to do; he was out of humor with Burton, and as he believed that the latter would soon sell he may not have regarded it as a dishonorable proceeding. Undoubtedly Burton looked on Poe's action in advertising his new enterprise at that moment as likely to diminish the selling value of his property; if in addition Poe attempted to secure his subscribers in an underhand way, he would have had cause to be offended, and if he remonstrated Poe may have told him that he "looked upon him as a blackguard and a villain," in the phrases of his letter to Snodgrass. That there is no explicit mention of the charge in the letter to Burton already given, in which Poe makes his explanation, counts for nothing in view of the points that mark omissions; but the letter proves with sufficient certainty that, whatever contributory circumstances such as Rosenbach relates there may have been, in the beaten way of business the "Penn Magazine" was the apple of discord, as the latent hope of it was the source of Poe's discontent in his position from the first.

CHAPTER VII

THE PENN MAGAZINE

"THE PENN MAGAZINE" was publicly[1] announced, June 13, 1840, to appear January 1, 1841; as early as August the prospectus was sent to the press, and to Poe's relatives and other friends, new and old, in the South and West. The most notable of these new friends, — all prospective contributors, — whose correspondence now enters into Poe's biography, were Dr. Thomas Holley Chivers, a Georgia poet, John Tomlin, a Tennessee poet, and Frederick William Thomas, a poet born in Rhode Island but claiming to be wholly a Southerner, as he was bred in Charleston, South Carolina. The correspondence of the last, like that of Snodgrass, best illuminates the condition of the literary times and of Poe's career in his environment. It is noticeable for an element of comradery which is seldom met with in his letters. Thomas continued faithful to the end, and was plainly attached to Poe. At this time he was living in St. Louis, but in the follow-

[1] *Philadelphia Saturday Chronicle*, June 13, 1840.

ing March removed to Washington, where he was in the employ of the government. He was a novelist as well as a poet, author of "Clinton Bradshaw," "Howard Pinckney," "East and West," and other minor writings, and was interested in the magazine literature of the day. His letters are many and voluminous; their topics were the things of the moment; but in all that concerned Poe the writer was genuinely in earnest and took pains to serve him. He gave him unstinted praise and encouragement; he endeavored to aid him by obtaining newspaper advertisements of his various schemes for a magazine, and by urging him to renewed efforts to start it; but only the entire text of Thomas's letters would do justice to his devotion to Poe's interests, and his constant and affectionate personal feeling. He as well as Chivers, whose close connection with Poe was of a later date, responded kindly to the prospectus, and Tomlin sent on the names of nine subscribers.

Poe had become acquainted with Thomas just as he was announcing the "Penn," on the occasion of the latter's visit east as delegate to the presidential convention at Baltimore in May, 1840, and as author of "Howard Pinckney," which he was then publishing; and Poe, as was

apparently his custom, had shown him hospitality. He wrote to him, after his return to St. Louis, with regard to a promised contribution:

PHILADELPHIA, November 23, 1840.

MY DEAR THOMAS, — I only received yours of the sixth about an hour ago, having been out of town for the last ten days. Believe me, I was very glad to hear from you — for in truth I had given you up. I did not get the [St. Louis] "Bulletin" you sent, but saw the notice at the Exchange. The "Bulletin" has always been very kind to me, and I am at a loss to know who edits it — will you let me into this secret when you write again? Neither did "Howard Pinckney" come to hand. Upon receipt of your letter, just now, I called at Congress Hall — but no books. Mr. Bateman had been there, and gone, forgetting to leave them. I shall get them on his return. Meantime, and long ago, I have read the novel, with its predecessors. I like "Howard P[inckney]" very well — better than "E[ast] and W[est]," and not nearly so well as "C[linton] B[radshaw]." You give yourself up to your own nature (which is a noble one, upon my soul) in "Clinton Bradshaw"; but in "Howard Pinckney" you abandon the broad rough road for the

dainty by-paths of authorism. In the former you are interested in what you write, and write to please, pleasantly; in the latter, having gained a name, you write to maintain it, and the effort becomes apparent. This consciousness of reputation leads you so frequently into those literary and other disquisitions about which we quarrelled at Studevant's. If you would send the public opinion to the devil, forgetting that a public existed, and write from the natural promptings of your own spirit, you would do wonders. In a word, *abandon* is wanting in "Howard Pinckney," — and when I say this you must know that I mean a high compliment — for they to whom this very *abandon* may be safely suggested are very few indeed, and belong to the loftier class of writers. I would say more of "Howard Pinckney," but nothing in the shape of criticism can be well said *in petto*, and I intend to speak fully of the novel in the first number of the "Penn Magazine" — which I am happy to say will appear in January. I may just observe now, however, that I pitied you when I saw the blunders, typographical and Frostigraphical, — although, to do Frost justice, I do not think he looked at the proofs at all.

Thank you a thousand times for your good

wishes and kind offers. I shall wait anxiously for the promised article. I should like to have it, if possible, in the first sheet, which goes to press early in December. But I know that I may depend upon you, and therefore say no more upon this head. For the rest, your own experience and friendship will suggest the modes by which you may serve me in St. Louis. Perhaps you may be able to have the accompanying "Prospectus" (which you will see differs from the first) inserted once or twice in some of the city papers — if you can accomplish this without trouble I shall be greatly obliged to you. Have you heard that that illustrious graduate of St. John's College, Cambridge (Billy Barlow [Burton]), has sold his magazine to Graham, of the "Casket"?

Mrs. Clemm and Virginia unite with me in the kindest remembrance to yourself and sister — with whom your conversation (always turning upon the "one loved name") has already made us all so well acquainted. How long will it be before I see you again? Write immediately.

Yours most truly, E. A. P.[1]

Meanwhile George R. Graham, editor of a feeble monthly, the "Casket," had bought out

[1] Griswold MSS.

GEORGE R. GRAHAM

Burton in October, and now merged the two under the name, soon to become famous, of "Graham's Magazine." He was also one of the proprietors of "The Saturday Evening Post," a weekly, in which Poe had been praised with increasing warmth and frequency for the past year. By such means, apparently, Poe and Graham had come to a better acquaintance in the fall of 1840. It is also reported by Graham that Burton said to him in connection with the sale, and referring to Poe, "There is one thing more; I want you to take care of my young editor." [1]

Poe's publications after leaving "Burton's" were of the slightest and most obscure. He may have written for "Alexander's Weekly Messenger," in which his sensational articles on cryptography had formerly appeared, and for other papers, as he had done on first coming to Philadelphia, and possibly it was now that he contributed to the "United States Military Magazine," in which at one time he had an article of considerable length; [2] but no work of his has been traced

[1] *The Philadelphia Magazines and their Contributors*, 1741–1850. By Albert H. Smyth, Philadelphia, p. 217.

[2] P. S. Duval to the author, August 4, 1884. This magazine was printed in Duval's lithographing establishment, in which Wilmer, in his *Recollections*, says Poe at one time, despairing of literature as a means of support, undertook to learn lithogra-

except one tale, in the December "Gentleman's," after Graham's purchase, in which he published one of the most striking of the tales of conscience, "The Man of the Crowd." He fell ill in December, and consequently the issue of the "Penn" was postponed to March 1, 1841. He was, however, still enthusiastic for his project, and wrote to Kennedy to secure his aid:—

PHILADELPHIA, December 31, 1840.

MY DEAR SIR, — I am about to commence, in this city, a Monthly Magazine somewhat on the plan of the "Southern Messenger," and of which you may have seen a Prospectus in some of the Baltimore papers. The leading feature proposed is that of an absolutely independent criticism. Since you gave me my first start in the literary world, and since indeed I seriously say that without the timely kindness you once evinced towards me, I should not at this moment be among the living — you will not feel surprise that I look anxiously to you for encouragement in this new enterprise — the first of any importance which I have undertaken on my own account. What I most seriously need, in the commencement, is

phy. Mr. Duval writes that there is no truth whatever in this statement.

caste for the journal — I need the countenance of those who stand well in the social not less than in the literary world. I know that you have never yet written for Magazines — and this is a main reason for my now begging you to give me something for my own. I care not what the article be, nor of what length — what I wish is the weight of your name. Any unused scrap lying by you will fully answer my purpose.

The Magazine will be issued on the first of March, and, I believe, under the best auspices. May I ask your influence among your personal friends.

I shall look with great anxiety for your reply to this letter. In the mean time believe me, my dear Sir,

Yours ever gratefully & respectfully,

EDGAR A. POE.

JOHN P. KENNEDY, Esqr.

In January he discloses to Snodgrass the state of his plans: —

PHILADELPHIA, January 17, 1841.

MY DEAR SIR, — Your letters are always welcome — albeit "few and far between" (what an infamous tautology is that, by the bye, for visits that are few *must* be far between) — and your

last letter was especially so. I thought you had forgotten me altogether.

You write to know my prospects with the "Penn." They are *glorious*, notwithstanding the world of difficulties under which I labored and labor. My illness (from which I have now entirely recovered) has been, for various reasons, a benefit to my scheme rather than a disadvantage; and, upon the whole, if I do not eminently succeed in this enterprise the fault will be altogether mine own. Still, I am using every exertion to insure success, and, among other manœuvres, I have cut down the bridges behind me. I must now do or die — I mean in a literary sense.

Thank you for your offer of aid. I shall be delighted to receive any *prose* article from your pen. As for poetry, I am overstocked with it. I am particularly anxious for a paper on the International Copy Right law, or on the subject of the Laws of Libel in regard to Literary Criticism; but I believe these topics are not "in your line." Your friend, David Hoffman, Esqr has been so kind as to promise me his aid; and perhaps he would not be unwilling to send me something on one or the other of the heads in question. *Will you oblige me by speaking to him on this subject?* Above all things it is necessary that whatever be

done, "if done, be done quickly"; for I am about to put the first sheet to press immediately, and the others will follow in rapid succession.

In regard to my plans, &c., the Prospectus will inform you in some measure. I am resolved upon a good outward appearance — clean type, fine paper, &c., — double columns, I think, & brevier, with the poetry running across the page in a single column. No steel engravings; but now and then a superior wood cut in illustration of the text. Thick covers. In the literary way, I shall endeavor, gradually (if I cannot effect the purpose at once), to give the Magazine a reputation for the having *no articles but from* the best pens — a somewhat negative merit, you will say. In criticism I will be bold and sternly, absolutely just, with friend & foe. From this purpose nothing shall turn me. I shall aim at *originality* in the body of the work, more than at any other especial quality. I have one or two articles of my own *in statu pupillari* that would make you stare, at least on account of the utter oddity of their conception. To carry out the conception is a difficulty which — may be overcome.

I have not seen the January "Messenger"; but "Quotidiana" is a very good title. "Quadlibetica" is also good, and even more inclusive

than the other. I am fond of such articles as these; and in good hands they may be made very interesting.

Mr. Burton, that illustrious "graduate of St. John's College, Cambridge," is going to the devil with the worst grace in the world, but with a velocity truly astounding. The press here in a body have given him the cut direct. So be it—*suum cuique*. We have said quite enough about this genius.

Mr. Graham is a very gentlemanly personage. I will see him to-morrow, and speak to him in regard to your essay; although to prevent detection, Burton may have destroyed it.

And now, my dear Snodgrass, will you do me a favor? I have heard some mention of a new magazine to be started in Baltimore by a Virginian & a practical printer. I am *anxious* to know all the details of the project. Can you procure and send me (by return of mail) a Prospectus? If you cannot get one, will you write me all about it—the gentleman's name, &c., &c., &c.?

I have underscored the word "anxious" because I really mean what I say, and because, about a fortnight ago, I made to the Hon. N. C. Brooks, A. M., a request just such as I now

make to yourself. *He did not reply;* and I, expecting of course the treatment which one gentleman naturally expects from another, have been put to the greatest inconvenience by the daily but fruitless expectation.

Very truly & respectfully yours,

EDGAR A. POE.

On the back of this letter was printed the prospectus of "The Penn Magazine," which forms the basis of Poe's many subsequent notices of a similar kind, and explains the aims and purposes that he continued to cherish as peculiarly his own. It read as follows: —

PROSPECTUS

OF

THE PENN MAGAZINE,

A MONTHLY LITERARY JOURNAL,

To be edited and published in the city of Philadelphia,

BY EDGAR A. POE.

TO THE PUBLIC. — Since resigning the conduct of the "Southern Literary Messenger," at the commencement of its third year, I have always had in view the establishment of a Magazine which should retain some of the chief

features of that journal, abandoning or greatly modifying the rest. Delay, however, has been occasioned by a variety of causes, and not until now have I found myself at liberty to attempt the execution of the design.

I will be pardoned for speaking more directly of the "Messenger." Having in it no proprietary right, my objects too being at variance in many respects with those of its very worthy owner, I found difficulty in stamping upon its pages that *individuality* which I believe essential to the full success of all similar publications. In regard to their permanent influence, it appears to me that a continuous definite character, and a marked certainty of purpose, are requisites of vital importance; and I cannot help believing that these requisites are only attainable when one mind alone has the general direction of the undertaking. Experience has rendered obvious—what might indeed have been demonstrated *a priori*—that in founding a Magazine of my own lies my sole chance of carrying out to completion whatever peculiar intentions I may have entertained.

To those who remember the early days of the Southern periodical in question, it will be scarcely necessary to say that its main feature

was a somewhat overdone causticity in its department of Critical Notices of new books. "The Penn Magazine" will retain this trait of severity insomuch only as the calmest yet sternest sense of justice will permit. Some years since elapsed may have mellowed down the petulance without interfering with the rigor of the critic. Most surely they have not yet taught him to read through the medium of a publisher's will, nor convinced him that the interests of letters are unallied with the interests of truth. It shall be the first and chief purpose of the Magazine now proposed to become known as one where may be found at all times, and upon all subjects, an honest and a fearless opinion. It shall be a leading object to assert in precept, and to maintain in practice, the rights, while in effect it demonstrates the advantages, of an absolutely independent criticism; — a criticism self-sustained; guiding itself only by the purest rules of Art; analyzing and urging these rules as it applies them; holding itself aloof from all personal bias; acknowledging no fear save that of outraging the right; yielding no point either to the vanity of the author, or to the assumptions of antique prejudice, or to the involute and anonymous cant of the Quarterlies, or to the arro-

gance of those organized *cliques* which, hanging like nightmares upon American literature, manufacture, at the nod of our principal booksellers, a pseudo-public-opinion by wholesale. These are objects of which no man need be ashamed. They are purposes, moreover, whose novelty at least will give them interest. For assurance that I will fulfill them in the best spirit and to the very letter, I appeal with confidence to those friends, and especially to those Southern friends, who sustained me in the "Messenger," where I had but a very partial opportunity of completing my own plans.

In respect to the other characteristics of the "Penn Magazine" a few words here will suffice.

It will endeavor to support the general interests of the republic of letters, without reference to particular regions — regarding the world at large as the true audience of the author. Beyond the precincts of literature, properly so called, it will leave in better hands the task of instruction upon all matters of *very* grave moment. Its aim chiefly shall be *to please* — and this through means of versatility, originality, and pungency. It may be as well here to observe that nothing said in this Prospectus should be construed into a design of sullying the Magazine with any tinc-

ture of the buffoonery, scurrility, or profanity, which are the blemish of some of the most vigorous of the European prints. In all branches of the literary department, the best aid, from the highest and purest sources, is secured.

To the mechanical execution of the work the greatest attention will be given which such a matter can require. In this respect it is proposed to surpass, by very much, the ordinary Magazine style. The form will somewhat resemble that of "The Knickerbocker"; the paper will be equal to that of "The North American Review"; pictorial embellishments are promised only in the necessary illustration of the text.

"The Penn Magazine" will be published in Philadelphia, on the first of each month: and will form, half-yearly, a volume of about 500 pages. The price will be $5 per annum, payable in advance, or upon the receipt of the first number, which will be issued on the first of March, 1841. Letters addressed to the Editor and Proprietor,

EDGAR A. POE.

PHILADELPHIA, January 1, 1841.

Graham, however, made him a good offer, and the coincidence of this with the financial depression through the country and his own

entire lack of resources temporarily balked his own scheme. In joining "Graham's," nevertheless, he did not abandon his ambition to found a magazine, or even his particular project; his state of mind was the same as that with which he had joined "Burton's," except that Graham was well aware of his wishes, and even held out hopes of satisfying them in the future. The "Saturday Evening Post," February 20, 1841, announced that the scheme of the "Penn Magazine" had been suspended, owing to the disturbance in monetary affairs, in which periodicals were always the first to suffer; it was added that its editor had the finest prospects of success, the press, and particularly the South and West, being warm in his cause, and an excellent list of subscribers having been already secured; this "stern, just, and competent critic," it concluded, would now take the editorial chair of "Graham's." Thomas, who was now in Washington, heard the news, and immediately offered a serial novel to the new editor, and Tomlin also wrote, warmly expressing the disappointment of Poe's friends in Tennessee and placing himself at his service at all times.

Poe, whose hand may be clearly seen in the critical department of "Graham's" as early as

February, took charge of the magazine with the April issue. In the same month he wrote to Snodgrass, as has been seen, "The 'Penn,' I hope, is only 'scotched, not killed,'" and added that the project would "unquestionably be resumed hereafter." He acted on the understanding he had with Graham in regard to the future; and within two months wrote to his old friend, Kennedy, then in Congress, on the subject, and also to Fitz Greene Halleck, Cooper, and Longfellow. These letters are of the same tenor and similar in language, and were of the nature of a private prospectus. The one to Longfellow is as follows:—

PHILADELPHIA, June 22, 1841.

DEAR SIR, — Your letter of the 19th May was received. I regret to find my anticipations confirmed, and that you cannot make it convenient to accept Mr. Graham's proposition. Will you now pardon me for making another?

I need not call your attention to the signs of the times in respect to magazine literature. You will admit that the tendency of the age lies in this way — so far at least as regards the lighter letters. The brief, the terse, the condensed, and the easily circulated will take place of the diffuse, the ponderous, and the inaccessible. Even our

reviews (*lucus a non lucendo*) are found too massive for the taste of the day: I do not mean for the taste of the tasteless, but for that of the few. In the mean time the finest minds of Europe are beginning to lend their spirit to magazines. In this country, unhappily, we have not any journal of the class which either can afford to offer pecuniary inducement to the highest talent, or which would be, in all respects, a fitting vehicle for its thoughts. In the supply of this deficiency there would be a point gained; and in the hope of at least partially supplying it, Mr. Graham and myself propose to establish a monthly Magazine.

The amplest funds will be embarked in the undertaking. The work will be an octavo of 96 pages. The paper will be of excellent quality — possibly finer than that upon which your "Hyperion" was printed. The type will be new (always new), clear, and bold, with distinct face. The matter will be disposed in a single column. The printing will be done upon a hand-press in the best manner. There will be a broad margin. There will be no engravings, except occasional wood cuts (by Adams) when demanded in obvious illustration of the text; and, when so required, they will be worked in with the type — not upon separate pages as in "Arcturus." The

stitching will be done in the French style, permitting the book to lie fully open. Upon the cover, and throughout, the endeavour will be to preserve the greatest purity of taste consistent with decision and force. The price will be five dollars.

The chief feature in the literary department will be that of contributions from the most distinguished pens (of America) exclusively: or if this plan cannot be wholly carried out, we propose, at least, to make arrangements (if possible) with yourself, Mr. Irving, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Paulding, Mr. Bryant, Mr. Halleck, Mr. Willis, and one or two others. In fact, our ability to make these arrangements is a condition without which the Magazine will not go into operation; and my object in writing you this letter is to ascertain how far I may look to yourself for aid.

In your former note you spoke of present engagements. The proposed journal will not be commenced until January 1, 1842.

It would be desirable that you should agree to furnish one paper each month, — prose or poetry, absolute or serial, — and of such length as you might deem proper. Should illustrations be desired by you, these will be engraved at our expense, from designs at your own, superintended

by yourself. We leave the matter of terms, as before, to your own decision. The sums agreed upon would be paid as you might suggest. It would be necessary that our agreement should be made for one year — during which period you should be pledged not to write for any other (American) Magazine.

With this letter I despatch one of the same tenor to each of the gentlemen before named. If you cannot consent to an unconditional reply, will you be kind enough to say whether you will write for us upon condition that we succeed in our engagements with the others — specifying what others.

With high respect, your obedient,

EDGAR A. POE.[1]

The letter to Kennedy is more personal and contains in nearly identical words the entire letter to Longfellow: —

PHILADELPHIA, June, 1841.

MY DEAR SIR, — Mr. George R. Graham (of this city) and myself desire to establish a Monthly Magazine upon certain conditions — one of which is the procuring your assistance in the enterprise. Will you permit me to send a

[1] Griswold MSS.

few words on the subject? . . . [The omitted passage is the second paragraph of the letter to Longfellow].

Mr. Graham is a lawyer, but for some years past has been occupied in publishing. His experience of the periodical business is extensive. He is a gentleman of high social standing, and possessed of ample pecuniary means. Together we would enter the field with a full knowledge of the difficulties to be encountered, and with perfect assurance of being able to overcome them. . . . [The omitted passage is the third paragraph to Longfellow].

I believe I sent you, some time ago, a Prospectus of the "Penn Magazine," the scheme of which was broken up by the breaking up of the banks. The name will be preserved — and the general intentions, of that journal. A vigorous independence shall be my watchword still — *truth*, not so much for truth's sake, as for the sake of the novelty of the thing. . . . [The omitted passage is the fourth and sixth paragraphs to Longfellow.]

I look most anxiously for your answer, for it is of vital importance to me, personally. This you will see at once. Mr. Graham is to furnish all supplies, and will give me merely for editorial

service and my list of subscribers to the old "Penn" a half interest in the proposed Magazine — but he will only engage in the enterprise on the conditions before stated — on condition that I can obtain as contributors the gentlemen above named — or at least the most of them — giving them carte blanche as to terms. Your name will enable me, I know, to get several of the others. You will not fail me at this crisis! If I get this Magazine fairly afloat, with money to back me as now, I will have everything my own way. . . . [The omitted passage is the seventh paragraph to Longfellow].

Most truly yours,

EDGAR A. POE.[1]

JOHN P. KENNEDY, Esq.

N. B. If you have a novel on the tapis, you could not dispose of it in any way so advantageously as by selling it to us. You would get more for it than L. & B. would give. It would be printed in finer style than they could afford to print it — and it would have a far wider circulation in our Magazine than in book form. We will commence with an edition of 3000.

A letter to Snodgrass discloses Poe at work:

[1] Kennedy MSS.

PHILADELPHIA, July, 12, 1841.

MY DEAR SNODGRASS, — I have this moment received yours of the 10th and am really glad to find that you have not quite given me up. A letter from you now is a novelty indeed.

The "Reproof of a Bird" will appear in the September number. The last sheet of the August no: has already gone to press.

I am innocent of the elision in your quoted lines. Most probably the syllables were left out by our proof-reader, who looks over the articles after me, for such things as turned s's and o's, or battered type. Occasionally he takes strange liberties. In the forthcoming number he has substituted, (I see), a small for a capital R in Rozinante. Still — the lines *read* very well as they are, and no great harm is done. Every one is not to know that the last one is a finale to a stanza.

You say some of your monumental writers "feel small," — but is not that, for them, a natural feeling? I never had much opinion of Arthur. What little merit he has is negative. McJilton I like much better. He has written one or two *very* good things. As a man, also, I like him better. Do you know, by the bye, that W. G. Clark reproved me in his "Gazette," for speaking too favorably of McJilton?

I reënclose the notice . . . [illegible]. It was unavoidably crowded from the July no: and we thought it *out of date* for the August. I have not read the book — but I would have been willing to take his merits upon your word.

You flatter me about the "Maelström." It was finished in a hurry, and therefore its conclusion is imperfect. Upon the whole it is neither so good, nor has it been one half so popular as "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." I have a paper in the August no: which will please you.

Among the Reviews (for August) I have one which will, at least, surprise you. It is a long notice of a satire by a quondam Baltimorean, L. A. Wilmer. You must get this satire and read it — it is really good — good in the old-fashioned Dryden style. It blazes away, too, to the right & left — sparing not. I have made it the text from which to preach a fire-&-fury sermon upon critical independence, and the general literary humbuggery of the day. I have introduced in this sermon some portion of a review formerly written by me for the "Pittsburg Examiner," a monthly journal which died in the first throes of its existence. It was edited by E. Burke Fisher, Esqre — than whom a greater scamp never walked. He wrote to me offering 4$ per page for

criticisms, promising to put them in as contributions — not editorially. The first thing I saw was one of my articles under the editorial head, so altered that I hardly recognized it, and interlarded with all manner of bad English and ridiculous opinions of his own. I believe, however, that the number in which it appeared, being the last kick of the maga: was never circulated.

I presume you get our Mag: regularly. It is mailed to your address.

Very cordially your friend,

EDGAR A. POE.

Will you do me the favor to call at the Baltimore P. O. and enquire for a letter addressed to John P. Kennedy *at Baltimore*. By some absence of mind I directed it to that city in place of Washington. If still in the P. O. will you forward it to Washington?

This was followed by another letter in September, which shows that he still looked hopefully for Graham's coöperation: —

PHILADELPHIA, September 19, 1841.

MY DEAR SNODGRASS, — I seize the first moment of leisure to say a few words in reply to yours of Sep. 6.

Touching the "Reproof of a Bird," I hope you will give yourself no uneasiness about it. *We* don't mind the contre-temps; and as for Godey, it serves him right, as you say. The moment I saw the article in the "Lady's Book," I saw at once how it all happened.

You are mistaken about "The Dial." I have no quarrel in the world with that illustrious journal, nor it with me. I am not aware that it ever mentioned my name, or alluded to me either directly or indirectly. My slaps at it were only in "a general way." The tale in question is a mere extravaganza levelled at no one in particular, but hitting right and left at things in general.

The "Knickerbocker" has been purchased by Otis Broadus & Co. of Boston. I believe it is still edited by Clark, the brother of W. Gaylord.

Thank you for attending to the Kennedy matter. We have no news here just yet — something may turn up by & bye. It is not impossible that Graham will join me in the "Penn." He has money. By the way, is it impossible to start a first-class Mag: in Baltimore? Is there no publisher or gentleman of moderate capital who would join me in the scheme? — publishing the work in the City of Monuments?

Do write me soon & tell me the news.

Yours most cordially,

EDGAR A. POE.

To Poe's office work also belongs the beginning, so far as is known, of his personal relations with Willis, who was afterwards to prove so kind a friend. Willis writes upon a matter of business, and his postscript indicates previous correspondence: —

GLENMARY, November 30, 1841.

MY DEAR SIR, — You cannot have received my letter written in answer to yours some time since (say a month ago) in which I stated that I was under contract to Mr. Godey to write for no other periodical in Philadelphia than the "Lady's Book," for one year — 1842. I said also that if he were willing, I should be very happy to send you *poetry* (he bargaining for *prose*), but that without his consent I could no nothing. From a very handsome notice of "Graham's Magazine" which I saw in the "Lady's Book," I presumed Godey and Graham were the best of friends and would manage it between them. Still, I do not understand your request — for the "Lady Jane" will be published (all they agreed for — 100 stanzas) in their own paper before January 1, and, of

course, any extract would not be original. Any periodical is at liberty to copy, for though Wilson has taken out a copyright, I should always consider copying it too much of a compliment to be resented.

Mr. Godey has been very liberal with me, and pays me quite enough for the exclusive use of my name in Philadelphia, and I can do nothing unless you procure his written agreement to it, of course. I am very sorry to refuse anything to a writer whom I so much admire as yourself, and to a magazine as good as "Graham's." But you will acknowledge I am "in a tight place."

Begging my compliments to Mr. Graham, I remain, Yours very truly.

N. P. WILLIS.[1]

Did you ever send me the magazine containing my autograph? I have never seen it.

The real feeling of Poe, in his situation, comes out plainly in the long-continued attempt he had begun to obtain office by presidential appointment. The death of Harrison and the accession of Tyler had fluttered the office-seekers, who swarmed about the new administration. Poe had

[1] Griswold MSS.

hardly entered on his duties when Thomas made the first suggestion, from his post of observation at Washington.

WASHINGTON, May 20, 1841.

. . . How would you like to be an office-holder here at $1500 per year payable monthly by Uncle Sam, who, however slack he may be to his general creditors, pays his officials with due punctuality? How would you like it? You stroll to your office a little after nine in the morning leisurely, and you stroll from it a little after two in the afternoon homeward to dinner and return no more that day. If, during office hours, you have anything to do, it is an agreeable relaxation from the monotonous laziness of the day. You have on your desk everything in the writing line in apple-pie order, and if you choose to lucubrate in a literary way, why you can lucubrate.

Come on and apply for a clerkship; you can follow literature here as well as where you are — and think of the money to be made by it — "Think of that, Master Brook," as Sir John sayeth. Write to me, if you love me, on the reception of this . . . .

My kindest regards to your mother and wife.

Your friend, F. W. THOMAS.[1]

[1] Griswold MSS.

Thomas himself immediately obtained an office, which he described as temporary, and the incident naturally excited Poe's hopes at the same time that it drew forth his congratulations: He wrote, June 26, 1841: —

"I have just heard through Graham, who obtained his information from Ingraham, that you have stepped into an office at Washington, salary $1000. From the bottom of my heart I wish you joy. You can now lucubrate at your ease, and will infallibly do something worthy yourself.

"For my own part, notwithstanding Graham's unceasing civility and real kindness, I feel more and more disgusted with my situation. Would to God I could do as you have done. Do you seriously think that an application on my part to Tyler would have a good result? My claims, to be sure, are few. I am a Virginian — at least I call myself one, for I have resided all my life, until within the last few years, in Richmond. My political principles have always been, as nearly as may be, with the existing administration, and I battled with right good-will for Harrison, when opportunity offered. With Mr. Tyler I have some slight personal acquaintance, although it is a matter which he has possibly forgotten. For the

rest I am a literary man, and I see a disposition in Government to cherish letters. Have I any chance? I would be greatly indebted to you if you would reply to this as soon as you can, and tell me if it would, in your opinion, be worth my while to make an effort; and, if so, put me on the right track. This could not be better done than by detailing to me your own mode of proceeding."[1]

To this Thomas replied immediately: —

WASHINGTON, July 1, 1841.

MY DEAR POE, — Yours of June 26 I received yesterday. I trust, my dear friend, that you can obtain an appointment. President Tyler I have not even seen except in passing in his carriage — never having called at the White House since the death of Harrison, except to see the sons of the President, and then they were not in. Could n't you slip on here, and see the President yourself? Or if you would prefer it, I will see him for you. But perhaps your application had better be made through some one who has influence with the executive. I have heard you say that J. P. Kennedy had a regard for you. He is here a Congressman, and would serve you — would he not?

[1] Poe to Thomas, Stoddard, xciii.

. . . [The omitted passage refers to his own employment.] Your friend,

F. W. THOMAS.[1]

On July 4 Poe followed up the matter by another more urgent request: —

"I received yours of the 1st this morning, and have again to thank you for the interest you take in my welfare. I wish to God I could visit Washington, but — the old story, you know — I have no money; not enough to take me there, saying nothing of getting back. It is a hard thing to be poor; but as I am kept so by an honest motive I dare not complain.

"Your suggestion about Mr. Kennedy is well-timed, and here, Thomas, you can do me a true service. Call upon Kennedy — you know him, I believe; if not, introduce yourself — he is a perfect gentleman, and will give you cordial welcome. Speak to him of my wishes, and urge him to see the Secretary of War in my behalf, or one of the other Secretaries, or President Tyler. I mention in particular the Secretary of War, because I have been to W. Point, and this may stand me in some stead. I would be glad to get almost any appointment, even a $500 one, so

[1] Griswold MSS.

that I have something independent of letters for a subsistence. To coin one's brain into silver, at the nod of a master, is, to my thinking, the hardest task in the world. Mr. Kennedy has been, at all times, a true friend to me — he was the first true friend I ever had — I am indebted to him *for life itself*. He will be willing to help me now, but *needs urging*, for he is always head and ears in business." [1]

Thomas did as he was asked, but with no visible good result, though he was still hopeful: —

WASHINGTON, August 30, 1841.

MY DEAR POE, — . . . I wrote you that I saw Kennedy, and that he expressed his willingness to aid you in any way in his power. Since, I have conversed with the President's sons about you; they think the President will be able and willing to give you a situation, but they say, and I felt the truth of the remark before it was made, that at the present crisis, when everything is "hurly-burly," it would be of no avail to apply to him. He is much perplexed, as you may suppose, amidst the conflicting parties, the anticipated cabinet break up, &c. As soon as times get a little more quiet I will wait on the

[1] Poe to Thomas, Stoddard, xciv, xcv.

President myself, and write you of the interview.

Your cryptography makes quite a talk here. Hampton tells me he had quite a demand for your August number containing it.

Your friend, F. W. THOMAS.[1]

Besides indulging in this plan, Poe now remembered his old publishers, Lea & Blanchard, and entertained the hope that they would undertake a new edition of his "Tales," including the best of those written since 1839. He was still, perhaps, as he had written Snodgrass, under the impression that the earlier edition was exhausted.

MESSRS. LEA & BLANCHARD, —

Philadelphia:

Gentlemen, — I wish to publish a new collection of my prose Tales with some such title as this: —

"*The Prose Tales of Edgar A. Poe, including 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue,' the 'Descent into the Maelstrom,' and all his later pieces, with a second edition of the 'Tales of the Grotesque & Arabesque.'*"

The later pieces will be eight in number, mak-

[1] Griswold MSS.

ing the entire collection thirty-three, which would occupy two *thick* novel volumes.

I am anxious that your firm should continue to be my publishers, and, if you would be willing to bring out the book, I should be glad to accept the terms which you allowed me before, that is, you receive all profits, and allow me twenty copies for distribution to friends.

Will you be kind enough to give me an early reply to this letter, and believe me

Yours, very respectfully,

EDGAR A. POE.[1]

PHILADELPHIA,
Office Graham's Magazine, August 13, '41.

Whatever doubt he had regarding the matter was dissipated by the reply of the firm: —

August 16, 1841.

EDGAR A. POE:

We have yrs of 15th inst in which you are kind enough to offer us a "new collection of prose Tales."

In answer we very much regret to say that the state of affairs is such as to give little encouragement to new undertakings. As yet we have not got through the edition of the other work, and up

[1] *The Library of George W. Childs*, described by F. W. Robinson. Philadelphia, 1882: pp. 13, 14.

to this time it has not returned to us the expense of its publication. We assure you that we regret this on your account as well as on our own — as it would give us great pleasure to promote your views in relation to publication.[1]

[Unsigned.]

But if during his first summer on "Graham's" Poe could not start his own magazine, nor get a public office, nor publish a new volume of "Tales," his lot was to all outward appearance fortunate; his prospects were brilliant, his reputation steadily growing, his associates friendly, and, especially, his home, where he exercised a simple hospitality, was in a condition of greater comfort than ever before; he brought his friends Thomas and Hirst there, the two ladies whom he had courted in Baltimore in his youth visited him, and there were other guests and callers, so that the life of the family seems to have been by no means unsocial. Whatever practical difficulties it was his lot to encounter, he found a true home when he crossed the threshold of the little cottage where he lived with his wife and her mother. Mrs. Clemm, a vigorous woman of about fifty years, who is said to have had the

[1] Letter-book of Lea & Blanchard.

face, size, and figure of a man, was the head of the household, received and expended Poe's wages, and kept things in order; and, as always, both she and Virginia contributed what they could to the earnings of the family by taking in needlework or in other ways. The few men of letters who called on the family sometimes wondered, as did Mayne Reid, how this masculine matron should have been the mother of the child-like girl, still under twenty-one, who seemed rather the pet than the wife of the family. "She hardly looked more than fourteen," writes Miss Amanda Harris, who had her information from a Philadelphia friend, "fair, soft, and graceful and girlish. Every one who saw her was won by her. Poe was very proud and very fond of her, and used to delight in the round, childlike face and plump little figure, which he contrasted with himself, so thin and half-melancholy looking, and she in turn idolized him. She had a voice of wonderful sweetness, and was an exquisite singer, and in some of their more prosperous days, when they were living in a pretty little rose-covered cottage on the outskirts of Philadelphia, she had her harp and piano."[1] The description by Mrs. Weiss is

[1] *Hearth and Home*, Jan. 9, 1875, by Miss Amanda Harris,

most exact. Virginia had, she says, "a round, full face and figure, full, pouting lips, a forehead too high and broad for beauty, and bright black eyes and raven-black hair, contrasting almost startlingly with a white and colorless complexion."[1] The third member of this strangely-consorted group, Poe himself, was the same man that he had been in youth, — now thirty-two, high-strung, capricious, resentful, sensitive to the point of retorting with angry insolence when wounded, but kindly to his familiars; and within living a life like a secret, brooding, nervous, accessible to motives of dread; if he was not the monomaniac of fear he knew in Roderick Usher, he was haunted by vague apprehension. He did not like to go out in the dark, and with such jocularity as he was capable of said that he believed evil demons had power then. In his home he found unceasing care.

One evening when Virginia was singing at a home party at which both of the ladies from Baltimore seem to have been present, she ruptured a blood-vessel: her life was despaired of, and although she partially recovered it was only

who stated to the late W. M. Griswold that her information was at second hand, from a friend's report.

[1] Mrs. Weiss, p. 93.

to sink again and again. The sick-bed became the centre of the secluded home. Mr. Graham tells how he saw Poe hovering around the couch with fond fear and tender anxiety, shuddering visibly at her slightest cough: and he continues, "I rode out one summer evening with them, and the remembrance of his watchful eyes, eagerly bent upon the slightest change of hue in that loved face, haunts me yet as the memory of a sad strain."[1] But for Poe the subtle influence which moves in a poet's heart raised the transitory elements of his common story and transformed them, and made them a part of the world's legend of love and loss. In "Eleonora," which was published in this fall, 1841, in the "Gift" for 1842, his dreaming power turned thought and affliction to favor and to prettiness. The myth — for such it is — is pictorial, like a mediæval legend: the child-lovers are set in one of those preternatural landscapes which his genius built in the void: but on this sequestered Paradise there fell no shadow save that of loveliness curtaining, in innocent peace behind thick forests and innumerable flowers, the Valley of the Many-Colored Grass, through which the River of Silence flowed noiselessly, and watered the

[1] *Graham's Magazine*, March, 1850.

slender, white-barked trees that leaned toward the light, and mirrored the scented lawns besprinkled with lilies and a thousand bright blossoms. Here love came to the boy and girl, beneath the fantastic trees suddenly bursting into bloom, with bright star-shaped flowers, and they wander, like a new Aucassin and Nicolette, along the river that now murmurs musically, and over the ruby-red asphodels that spring up ten by ten in the place of the fallen white lilies: and the valley is filled with marvelous light and life and joy, as if glory and sweetness were imprisoned within its vaporous limits. Symbolism has seldom been more simple and pure, more imaginative, childlike, and direct, more absolute master of the things of sense for the things of the spirit, than in this unreal scene. Burne-Jones might have painted it, for it is the very spirit that sang of the "Romaunt of the Rose." Rossetti might have sung its sad conclusion: for now the lady died: —

"The star-shaped flowers shrank into the stems of the trees, and appeared no more. The tints of the green carpet faded: and, one by one, the ruby-red asphodels withered away: and there sprang up, in place of them, ten by ten, dark, eye-like violets, that writhed uneasily and were

ELEONORA

ever encumbered with dew. And Life departed from our paths: for the tall flamingo flaunted no longer his scarlet plumage before us, but flew sadly from the vale into the hills, with all the gay glowing birds that had arrived in his company. And the golden and silver fish swam down through the gorge at the lower end of our domain and bedecked the sweet river never again. And the lulling melody that had been softer than the wind harp of Æolus, and more divine than all save the voice of Eleonora, it died little by little away, in murmurs growing lower and lower, until the stream returned, at length, utterly, into the solemnity of its original silence. And then, lastly, the voluminous cloud uprose, and, abandoning the tops of the mountains to the dimness of old, fell back into the regions of Hesper, and took away all its manifold golden and gorgeous glories from the Valley of the Many-Colored Grass."[1]

Poe's life was full of glaring contrasts, just such as there is between this exquisite foreboding and the reality. To this experience he attributed the beginning, and to its continuance the increase, of his recourse to stimulants in his later life. Six years afterwards, in answer to

[1] *Works*, i, 208.

the question whether he could hint the "terrible evil" which was the cause of his "irregularities," he wrote:—

"Yes, I can do more than hint. This 'evil' was the greatest which can befall a man. Six years ago, a wife, whom I loved as no man ever loved before, ruptured a blood-vessel in singing. Her life was despaired of. I took leave of her forever, and underwent all the agonies of her death. She recovered partially, and I again hoped. At the end of a year, the vessel broke again. I went through precisely the same scene. . . . Then again — again — and even once again, at varying intervals. Each time I felt all the agonies of her death — and at each accession of the disorder I loved her more dearly and clung to her life with more desperate pertinacity. But I am constitutionally sensitive — nervous in a very unusual degree. I became insane, with long intervals of horrible sanity. During these fits of absolute unconsciousness I drank — God only knows how often or how much. As a matter of course, my enemies referred the insanity to the drink, rather than the drink to the insanity."[1]

The cousin, formerly Miss Herring, who as has

[1] Poe to Eveleth, Ingram, i, 125.

been noticed was intimate with the family at the time of Virginia's seizure, says that he then frequently refused wine in her presence, and adds that at that time his fits of intoxication were due to the excessive use of opium.[1] This is the earliest mention of Poe's use of the drug, but his acquaintance with its effects is noticeable in his earliest tales and it plays the same part in his romances as in the other imaginative literature of the period. When he first had recourse to it, for what purpose or with what effect, is a fruitless inquiry; but from this period, at least, no candid mind can exclude the suggestion, however shadowy, of its share in the morbid side of Poe's life.

From April, 1841, to June, 1842, Poe had contributed to every number of "Graham's," much of what he wrote being of his best work. This period of his authorship is especially distinguished by a remarkable quickening of his powers of analytical reasoning, by virtue of which he struck out a new vein of fiction. The first notable sign of this mental development is in the articles contributed to "Alexander's Weekly Messenger," about January, 1840, while he was still engaged on Burton's magazine, on the sub-

[1] Miss A. F. Poe to the author.

ject of cryptography, to which reference has already been made. In July, 1841, he returned to this popular subject, in "Graham's," and again received and translated several intricate cryptographs. On the 1st of May previous, when Graham's weekly, the "Saturday Evening Post," appeared in an enlarged and improved form, he gave distinction to the number by an analogous exercise of his analytical powers, — his successful exposure of the plot of "Barnaby Rudge" from the material afforded by the introductory chapters. Dickens is said to have been so surprised as to ask Poe if he were the devil. It was in April, 1841, however, in the very first number of his editing, that "Graham's" contained his earliest story in which this interest, the employment of method in disentangling a plot by mere ratiocination, is principally involved. It was "The Murders of the Rue Morgue," perhaps the most famous of his tales. It has been objected that really there is no analysis in unraveling a web woven for that purpose; and, in a sense, this is true. Acute as Poe's penetrative powers were, the ratiocinative tales (with the possible exception of "The Mystery of Marie Roget") do not illustrate them. The primary gift employed in these ingenious narratives is constructiveness; they

differ from their predecessors, from "The Fall of the House of Usher," for example, not in the intellectual faculties exercised, but in their aim and conduct. In the earlier group Poe gradually worked up to the *dénouement* of a highly complicated series of facts and emotions; in the later one, stating only the *dénouement* of a similar series, he gradually worked back to its origins: in both cases he first constructed the story, but in telling it he reversed in one the method used in the other. The main difference is that in the old process the emotional element counts for more, while in the new one the incidents are necessarily the important part; indeed, they almost absorb attention. That the ratiocinative tales are on a lower level than the imaginative ones hardly needs to be said, since it is so conclusively indicated by the fact that later writers have far surpassed Poe in the complexity of this sort of mechanism, and therefore in the apparent miracle of the solution. They come short of Poe only in the original invention of the plot; that is to say, they fail by defects of imagination in the selection, and of artistic power in the grouping, of their facts, for it would be a mistake to suppose that the interest in "The Murders of the Rue Morgue" is simply the puzzle of detection.

The other tales that appeared during his connection with "Graham's" are, in the "Post," the insignificant "A Succession of Sundays" ("Three Sundays in a Week"), and in "Graham's" "The Descent into the Maelström," which is to be classed with the "MS. Found in a Bottle," and is the best of its kind; "The Island of the Fay," the earliest of the simple landscape pieces, and a study, as it proved, for "Eleonora"; an arabesque in his old manner, "The Colloquy of Monos and Una," noticeable as the first open expression of dissatisfaction with modern institutions; the two inferior sketches, "Never Bet the Devil your Head," a satire on tales with a moral, and "Life in Death" ("The Oval Portrait"), a theme after Hoffmann; and the fine color study, "The Masque of the Red Death," in which the plot is managed almost exclusively by merely decorative effects.

In nearly all these tales, and particularly in this last one, the constructive genius of their author is most distinctively exercised; they are thus admirable illustrations of his theory as he developed it in his critical writings of this period, and fully reach the high standard of literary art by which he measured the works of others. Poe preferred the form of the short story to that of

the novel, for the same reason that he thought brevity an essential in purely poetic composition, because length is inconsistent with a single effect, or, as he termed it, with the unity or totality of interest. Both his aim and his method in narrative prose are succinctly described in his own words: —

"A skillful literary artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but having conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single *effect* to be wrought out, he then invents such incidents — he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect. If his very initial sentence tend not to the outbringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step. In the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one preëstablished design. And by such means, with such care and skill, a picture is at length painted which leaves in the mind of him who contemplates it with a kindred art, a sense of the fullest satisfaction. The idea of the tale has been presented unblemished, because undisturbed; and this is an end unattainable by the novel." [1]

[1] *Works*, vii, 31.

In Poe's best tales it is this ideal absolutely realized that has made them immortal.

Of his old poetry he contributed to the "Post" "The Coliseum" and "The Bridal Ballad," and to "Graham's" "To Helen," "Israfel," and "To One Departed," the last two much revised. The bulk of his writing, however, was critical, and consisted of notices of new books. In the course of the fifteen months he passed in review, at greater or less length, and with various degrees of care, works by Bulwer, Dickens, Macaulay, Marryat, Lever, and James, and, of American authors, Longfellow and Hawthorne, besides others of only local notoriety, such as Brainard, the Davidson sisters, Seba Smith, Wilmer, and Cornelius Mathews. There were shorter notices of many others, both at home and abroad, contemporary and classic; and in particular there was a concise view, which attracted great attention, of over a hundred native writers in three papers, entitled "Autography," an expansion of similar articles in the "Messenger" for 1836. Without entering in this place on the question of Poe's powers and influence as a critic (and throughout this period of his life, it must always be kept in mind he was more loudly known in America as a critic than as either a

romancer or a poet), his attitude toward his contemporaries cannot be even momentarily neglected at any stage of his career.

This attitude had not changed since he was editor of the "Messenger." He still remembered his review of "Norman Leslie" as inaugurating the new age in American criticism, and Theodore S. Fay continued to be his favorite example of the bepuffed literary impostor. His general view of our literary affairs at this time was expressed in a review of the satire by his friend Wilmer, "The Quacks of Helicon," in which he had incorporated his article written two years before and revamped by the editor of the "Pittsburg Examiner" in that short-lived periodical: —

"We repeat it: — *it is* the truth which he has spoken; and who shall contradict us? He has said unscrupulously what every reasonable man among us has long known to be 'as true as the Pentateuch' — that, as a literary people, we are one vast perambulating humbug. He has asserted that we are *clique*-ridden; and who does not smile at the obvious truism of that assertion? He maintains that chicanery is, with us, a far surer road than talent to distinction in letters. Who gainsays this? The corrupt nature of our

ordinary criticism has become notorious. Its powers have been prostrated by its own arm. The intercourse between critic and publisher, as it now almost universally stands, is comprised either in the paying and pocketing of blackmail, as the price of a simple forbearance, or in a direct system of petty and contemptible bribery, properly so-called — a system even more injurious than the former to the true interests of the public, and more degrading to the buyers and sellers of good opinion, on account of the more positive character of the service here rendered for the consideration received. We laugh at the idea of any denial of our assertions upon this topic; they are infamously true. . . .

"We may even arrive, in time, at that desirable point from which a distinct view of our men of letters may be obtained, and their respective pretensions adjusted, by the standard of rigorous and self-sustaining criticism alone. That their several positions are as yet properly settled; that the posts which a vast number of them now hold are maintained by any better tenure than that of the chicanery upon which we have commented, will be asserted by none but the ignorant, or the parties who have best right to feel an interest in the 'good old condition of things.' No two

matters can be more radically different than the reputation of some of our prominent *littérateurs*, as gathered from the mouths of the people, (who glean it from the paragraphs of the papers), and the same reputation as deduced from the private estimate of intelligent and educated men. We do not advance this fact as a new discovery. Its truth, on the contrary, is the subject, and has long been so, of every-day witticism and mirth.

. . . "Is there any man of good feeling and of ordinary understanding — is there one single individual among all our readers — who does not feel a thrill of bitter indignation, apart from any sentiment of mirth, as he calls to mind instance after instance of the purest, of the most unadulterated quackery in letters, which has risen to a high post in the apparent popular estimation, and which still maintains it, by the sole means of a blustering arrogance, or of a busy wriggling conceit, or of the most bare-faced plagiarism, or even through the simple immensity of its assumptions — assumptions not only unopposed by the press at large, but absolutely supported in proportion to the vociferous clamor with which they are made — in exact accordance with their utter baselessnes and untenability? We should have

no trouble in pointing out, to-day, some twenty or thirty so-called literary personages, who, if not idiots, as we half think them, or if not hardened to all sense of shame by a long course of disingenuousness, will now blush, in the perusal of these words, through consciousness of the shadowy nature of that purchased pedestal on which they stand — will now tremble in thinking of the feebleness of the breath which will be adequate to the blowing it from beneath their feet. With the help of a hearty good-will, even *we* may yet tumble them down."[1]

From this general condemnation Poe excepted an editor or two, and he reminded Wilmer, in deprecating indiscriminate abuse, that there were a few poets among us: —

"Mr. Bryant is not *all* a fool. Mr. Willis is not *quite* an ass. Mr. Longfellow *will* steal, but, perhaps, he cannot help it (for we have heard of such things), and then it must not be denied that *nil tetigit quod non ornavit.*"[2]

In his own glance at the literary republic, in the "Autography," he had dispensed praise very freely, nine tenths of the verdicts being favorable and many flattering. The principal exceptions were among the New England writers,

[1] *Works*, viii, 248 *et seq.* [2] *Ibid.*

especially those whom he believed to belong to the clique of the "North American Review": Emerson, in particular, as being, moreover, a transcendentalist, he treated contemptuously, and Longfellow, whom he generously declares "entitled to the first place among the poets of America," but adds, on jealous reflection, "certainly to the first place among those who have put themselves prominently forth as poets," he strikes at with the old cut, as being guilty of the sin of imitation, — "an imitation sometimes verging upon downright theft." [1]

In more detailed criticisms of current books, Poe, as was to be expected, merely made specifications of his general strictures regarding the low character of our literature. Whether he dealt with poetry or prose, with the dunces or the geniuses, his estimate, after he had first asked the absorbing question, "Was the writer a literary thief?" was that of a craftsman, and had almost exclusive reference to the workmanship. It consisted, as he would have said, in the application of principles of composition, in minute detail, instead of in the enunciation of them. Consequently, the criticism is, as a rule, so bound up with the work to which it relates as to have no

[1] *Works*, ix, 199.

value by itself, and has now no vitality. He spoke the truth in describing his reviews as neither wholly laudatory nor wholly defamatory, even in the most exasperating cases of stupidity. To the reader it will not infrequently seem that he used a giant's force to crush a fly, or in too many passages was guilty of the worst taste, or even now and then became scurrilous, blustering, and vituperative, or, especially when he attempted humor, very flat. The traits of his style were always the same, whether he was pricking a reputation or confining himself to mere criticism; he attended to one, or another, or all, of certain points, the chief being originality in idea, handling, construction, keeping, rhetorical and grammatical rules; and he exemplified by citation whatever defects or merits he found. Very seldom he felt able to give unstinted praise, as to Hawthorne, whose tales he said belonged "to the highest region of Art — an Art subservient to genius of a very lofty order," and whose mind he declared "original in *all* points"; [1] but even this notice, in which his insight and his justice are both conspicuous, he could not forbear to blot with the suggested charge that in "Howe's Masquerade" the New Englander had stolen

[1] *Works*, vii, 34.

directly from some passages in his own "William Wilson."

In none of these articles does Poe develop any principles except in that on Longfellow's "Ballads and other Poems." He barely touched the old topic of plagiarism, but made his attack in a new quarter by attempting to show that Longfellow's "conception of the *aims* of poesy *is all wrong*," for the reason that "didacticism is the prevalent *tone* of his song." In his proof Poe restated his poetic theory, which had become freed from its metaphysics since five years before, and in the course of his argument he struck out the happy phrase that remained his pet definition of poetry ever after: —

"Its [Poetry's] first element is the thirst for supernal BEAUTY — a beauty which is not afforded the soul by any existing collocation of earth's forms — a beauty which, perhaps, *no possible* combination of these forms would fully produce. Its second element is the attempt to satisfy this thirst by *novel* combinations among those forms of beauty which already exist, — or by novel combinations *of those combinations which our predecessors, toiling in chase of the same phantom, have already set in order.* We thus clearly deduce the *novelty*, the *originality*,

the *invention*, the *imagination*, or lastly, the *creation* of BEAUTY (for the terms as here employed are synonymous) as the essence of all Poesy." [1]

With a slight change (which summed up in one word a succeeding paragraph, embodying his view that music was a necessary constituent), this definition of poetry as being "the rhythmical creation of beauty" became the first principle of his poetic criticism, as indeed, however obscurely made out, it had always been. His former doctrine that a poem should have complete unity within itself he reiterated by reprinting unchanged the passage already quoted from the "Messenger" of 1836. In accordance with these canons, Longfellow, whom under all circumstances Poe ranked at the head of our poets, was judged to fail by making truth either a primary end or one secondary to mere beauty, and to succeed by confining his poems each to one idea.

Whether Poe's piquant criticisms and powerful tales made "Graham's" popular, or whether its success was due to the shrewd business sagacity and generous advertisement of its owners, the magazine had a brilliant run. It had opened

[1] *Works*, vi, 124.

with a circulation of eight thousand in January, 1841; in July it had risen to seventeen thousand; in December (at which time the names of Mrs. Emma C. Embury and Mrs. Ann S. Stephens were added to those of George R. Graham, C. J. Peterson, and Edgar A. Poe, as editors) it was twenty-five thousand, and in March forty thousand, — in each case according to the public announcement in the magazine itself. Poe was the working editor during this time, and is fairly entitled to a considerable share in the success of the undertaking. This very success, it may be believed, put an end to the other scheme which Poe had most at heart, and it also rendered less likely his hope that he would be allowed, at least, a proprietary share in the magazine: but if an editor's work ever deserved such recognition from the owner, certainly Poe's merited it. He was thus, it is true, the editor of the leading American magazine and might have been thought fortunately placed; he had jealous enemies, but he also had a high spirit and kindly friends; he remained, however, discontented, and was more and more chafed as, in the success of the magazine, he discerned ever more distinctly the failure of his own ambition. He was ripe to give up his place. His mind, both with regard to

a magazine of his own and to holding office, had not changed with the months, and Thomas encouraged him in both these feelings.

WASHINGTON, February 6, 1842.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — Yours of the 4 inst I duly received. It was not from forgetfulness, I assure you, that I have delayed writing so long. I was in hopes that I could make some suggestions to you with regard to a Magazine on your "own hook." Mr. Robert Tyler would assist you with his pen all he could, but I suppose he could not assist you in any other way, unless government patronage in the way of printing blanks, &c., could be given to you. Anything that I could do for you, you know will be done. Robert Tyler expressed himself highly gratified with your favorable opinion of his poem which I mentioned to him. He observed that he valued your opinion more than any other critic's in the country — to which I subscribed. I am satisfied that any aid he could extend to you would be extended with pleasure. Write me frankly upon the subject.

Poe, if an enterprising printer was engaged with you, a magazine could be put forth under your control which would soon surpass any in

the United States. Do you not know of such a man? Certainly with your reputation there are many printers who would gladly embrace such an opportunity of fortune.

In whatever magazine you are engaged editorially you should have an interest. Working at a salary, an editor feels not half the motive that he would if his emolument increased with the popularity of the work, the permanent success of which would be to him a source of pecuniary capital and support.

Speaking of the autographs: I must confess that I was more than surprised at the eulogistic notices which you took of certain writers — but I attributed it to a monomania partiality. I am glad to see that you still retain the unbiassed possession of your mental faculties. But, Poe, for the sake of that high independence of character which you possess you should not have let Graham influence you into such notices. There, that in complete imitation of your frankness. Truly I thought your notice of me a handsome one.

Ingraham is here. He is trying hard to get a situation abroad — and I trust he may succeed. I have not read "Barnaby Rudge" — and therefore I determined not to read your criticism on

it until I had. Nor have I read the "Curiosity Shop." To speak the truth, I glanced at several chapters of those works and did not get interested in them. "Nickleby," "The Pickwick Papers," and the "Sketches" I think Boz's best works.

It gave me sincere sorrow to hear of the illness of your "dear little wife." I trust long ere this she has entirely recovered. Though I have no wife, yet I have sisters, and have experienced the tenderness of woman's nature. I can therefore, in part, sympathise with you. Express my regard to your lady and mother. Poe, I long to see you. I assure you I never canvass a literary opinion in my mind without saying to myself: "I wonder what Poe will say of the book."

Dow is well — I saw him at the theatre last night. What are the prospects of the book trade for the spring? Have you heard, or have you formed an opinion? Judge Breckenridge's biography of his father was, as I suppose you have seen, published in the "Messenger." It took amazingly.

White of the "Messenger" is here. He called to see me yesterday. He has been very ill. What kind of a chap is he? as Sam Weller would ask.

Write a long letter, Poe, on the reception of

this. If you have any prospect of starting a magazine on your "own hook" let me know so that I may help you on in this quarter.

Your friend, F. W. THOMAS.[1]

EDGAR A. POE, Esq.

Poe now approached Robert Tyler with an application for his assistance in obtaining an appointment in the Philadelphia Custom House, and received this reply: —

WHITE HOUSE, March 31, 1842.

MY DEAR SIR, — I have received your letter in which you express your belief that Judge Blythe will appoint you to a situation in the Custom House, provided you have a reiteration of my former recommendations of you. It gives me pleasure to say to you that it would gratify me *very sensibly* to see you appointed by Judge Blythe. I am satisfied that no one is more competent, or would be more satisfactory in the discharge of any duty connected with the office. Believe me, my dear sir,

Truly yours, [Signature cut out].[2]

Thomas continued his good offices, in the same line: —

[1] Griswold MSS. [2] *Ibid.*

WASHINGTON, May 21, 1842.

MY DEAR POE, — I fear you have been reproaching me with neglect in not answering yours of March 13 before. If you have, you have done me injustice.

I knew it would be of no avail to submit your proposition to Robert Tyler, with regard to any pecuniary aid which he might extend to your undertaking, as he has nothing but his salary of $1500, and his situation requires more than its expenditure. In a literary point of view he would gladly aid you, but his time is so taken up with political and other matters that his contributions would be few and far between.

I therefore thought I could aid you better by interesting him in you personally, without your appearing, as it were, personally in the matter. In consequence I took occasion to speak of you to him frequently in a way that friendship and a profound respect for your genius and aquirements dictated. He thinks of you as highly as I do.

Last night I was speaking of you, and took occasion to suggest that a situation in the Custom House, Philadelphia, might be acceptable to you, as Lamb (Charles) had held a somewhat similar appointment, etc., etc., and as it would

leave you leisure to pursue your literary pursuits. Robert replied that he felt confident that such a situation could be obtained for you in the course of two or three months at farthest, as certain vacancies would then occur.

What say you to such a plan? Official life is not laborious — and a situation that would suit you and place you beyond the necessity of employing your pen, he says he can obtain for you there.

Let me hear from you as soon as convenient upon this subject.

I assure you, Poe, that not an occasion has offered when in the remotest way I thought I could serve you, that I did not avail myself of it — but I would not write upon mere conjectures that something available was about to occur. So my motives must be an apology, my friend, for my long silence.

Besides, I could not obtain for you, and I have tried repeatedly, Clay's report on the copyright question. I may be yet successful. If I had obtained it I might have written sooner — having that to write about.

Yes, I saw Dickens, but only at the dinner which a few of us gave him here — I liked him very much, though. You certainly exhibited

great sagacity in your criticism on "Barnaby Rudge." I have not yet read it — but I mean to do so, and then read your criticism, which I have put by for that purpose.

Somebody told me, for I have not seen it in print, that you and Graham had parted company. Is it so? . . .

Your friend, F. W. THOMAS.[1]

Poe immediately replied:—

PHILADELPHIA, May 25, 1842.

MY DEAR THOMAS, — Through an accident I have only just now received yours of the 21st. Believe me, I never dreamed of doubting your friendship, or of reproaching you for your silence. I knew you had good reasons for it; and, in this matter, I feel that you have acted for me more judiciously, by far, than I should have done for myself. You have shown yourself, from the first hour of our acquaintance, that *rara avis in terris* — "a true friend." Nor am I the man to be unmindful of your kindness.

What you say respecting a situation in the Custom House here gives me new life. Nothing could more precisely meet my views. Could I obtain such an appointment, I would be en-

[1] Griswold MSS.

abled thoroughly to carry out all my ambitious projects. It would relieve me of all care as regards a mere subsistence, and thus allow me time for thought, which, in fact, is action. I repeat that I would ask for nothing farther or better than a situation such as you mention. If the salary will barely enable me to live I shall be content. Will you say as much for me to Mr. Tyler, and express to him my sincere gratitude for the interest he takes in my welfare?

The report of my having parted company with Graham is correct; although in the forthcoming June number there is nò announcement to that effect; nor had the papers any authority for the statement made. My duties ceased with the May number. I shall continue to contribute occasionally. Griswold succeeds me. My reason for resigning was disgust with the namby-pamby character of the Magazine—a character which it was impossible to eradicate. I allude to the contemptible pictures, fashion-plates, music, and love-tales. The salary, moreover, did not pay me for the labour which I was forced to bestow. With Graham, who is really a very gentlemanly, although an exceedingly weak man, I had no misunderstanding. I am rejoiced to say that my dear little wife is much better, and I have strong

hope of her ultimate recovery. She desires her kindest regards—as also Mrs. Clemm.

I have moved from the old place—but should you pay an unexpected visit to Philadelphia, you will find my address at Graham's. I would give the world to shake you by the hand; and have a thousand things to talk about which would not come within the compass of a letter. Write immediately upon receipt of this, if possible, and do let me know something of yourself, your own doings and prospects: see how excellent an example of egotism I set you. Here is a letter nearly every word of which is about myself or my individual affairs. You saw White—little Tom. I am anxious to know what he said about things in general. He is a *character* if ever one was. God bless you—

EDGAR A. POE.[1]

Poe's acquaintance with Dickens began at Philadelphia. He introduced himself by sending his writings to the hotel, doubtless the "Tales" and the analysis of "Barnaby Rudge"; he called, and had two long interviews with the novelist, and seems to have asked his intervention in obtaining a London edition of his "Tales" and

[1] Griswold MSS.

possibly a connection with some London magazine or journal, as contributor. Copyright, which Dickens had made a lively subject, was, perhaps, another topic. The following letters are the only record of the occasion.

UNITED STATES HOTEL, [PHILADELPHIA,] March 6, 1842.

MY DEAR SIR, — I shall be very glad to see you whenever you will do me the favor to call. I think I am more likely to be in the way between half past eleven and twelve than at any other time. I have glanced over the books you have been so kind as to send me, and more particularly at the papers to which you called my attention. I have the greater pleasure in expressing my desire to see you on this account. Apropos of the "construction" of "Caleb Williams," do you know that Godwin wrote it *backwards*, — the last volume first, — and that when he had produced the hunting down of Caleb and the catastrophe, he waited for months, casting about for a means of accounting for what he had done?

Faithfully yours always,

CHARLES DICKENS.[1]

[1] Griswold MSS.

LONDON, 1 DEVONSHIRE TERRACE,
YORK GATE, REGENT'S PARK,
November 27, 1842.

DEAR SIR, — By some strange accident (I presume it must have been through some mistake on the part of Mr. Putnam in the great quantity of business he had to arrange for me), I have never been able to find among my papers, since I came to England, the letter you wrote to me at New York. But I read it there, and think I am correct in believing that it charged me with no other mission than that which you had already entrusted to me by word of mouth. Believe me that it never, for a moment, escaped my recollection; and that I have done all in my power to bring it to a successful issue—I regret to say, in vain.

I should have forwarded you the accompanying letter from Mr. Moxon before now, but that I have delayed doing so in the hope that some other channel for the publication of our book on this side of the water would present itself to me. I am, however, unable to report any success. I have mentioned it to publishers with whom I have influence, but they have, one and all, declined the venture. And the only consolation I can give you is that I do not believe any collection of detached pieces by an unknown

writer, even though he were an Englishman, would be at all likely to find a publisher in this metropolis just now.

Do not for a moment suppose that I have ever thought of you but with a pleasant recollection; and that I am not at all times prepared to forward your views in this country, if I can.

Faithfully yours, CHARLES DICKENS.[1]

Poe had now left "Graham's." One explanation given by the proprietor is that one day, on returning from an unusual absence from his duties, Poe found Mr. Rufus Wilmot Griswold in his chair, and at once turned and left the office, never to return.[2] That could hardly have been more than an incident in the truth. A man even so impulsive as Poe does not thus surrender through pique his main source of support, especially when he has a sick wife and is poor; nor, on the other hand, would a business man like Graham allow an editor, who had at least been instrumental in placing his magazine easily at the head of all competitors, and had a name of distinction, to depart for any such trivial display of temper. Poe had found only disappointment in the success of the magazine,

[1] Griswold MSS. [2] Gill, pp. 110, 111.

and Graham had found his editor, for one and another reason, impracticable. The office seems to have been friendly: Peterson, one of the editors, writes to Lowell at the very moment, "Poe is a splendid fellow, but as unstable as water";[1] and at all times Poe's immediate associates were kindly disposed to him. If he fell into bad ways temporarily, they were forbearing; it was the incidents associated with his ways that made him a difficult person in the end. There is no trace of bad feeling against Poe among those companions who knew him well or had daily intercourse with him. Yet at last in all cases the connection terminated. On the other hand, upon his side, there was always discontent with a subordinate situation. In the present instance the causes of this discontent will be clearly seen.

Poe returned to his favorite project, the "Penn Magazine," and he told the business side of his story to a "Graham" contributor: —

PHILADELPHIA, July 6, 1842.

MY DEAR SIR, — Upon my return from a brief visit to New York a day or two since, I found your kind and welcome letter of June 27.

[1] Peterson to Lowell, May 31, 1842. Lowell MSS.

What you say in respect to "verses" enclosed to myself has occasioned me some surprise. I have certainly received none. My connection with "Graham's Magazine" ceased with the May number, which was completed by the 1st of April — since which period the editorial conduct of the journal has rested with Mr. Griswold. You observe that the poem was sent about three weeks since. Can it be possible that the present editors have thought it proper to open letters addressed to myself, because addressed to myself as "Editor of 'Graham's Magazine'"? I know not how to escape from this conclusion; and now distinctly remember that, although in the habit of receiving many letters daily before quitting the office, I have not received more than a half dozen during the whole period since elapsed; and none of those received were addressed to me as "Editor of 'G.'s Magazine.'" What to say or do in a case like this I really do not know. I have no quarrel with either Mr. Graham or Mr. Griswold — although I hold neither in especial respect. I have much aversion to communicate with them in any way, and, perhaps, it would be best that you should address them yourself, demanding the MS.

Many thanks for your kind wishes. I hope the time is not far distant when they may be realized. I am making earnest although *secret* exertions to resume my project of the "Penn Magazine," and have every confidence that I shall succeed in issuing the first number on the first of January. You may remember that it was my original design to issue it on the first of January, 1841. I was induced to abandon the project at that period by the representations of Mr. Graham. He said that if I would join him as a salaried editor, giving up for the time my own scheme, he himself would unite with me at the expiration of six months, or certainly at the end of a year. As Mr. G. was a man of capital and I had no money, I thought it most prudent to fall in with his views. The result has proved his want of faith and my own folly. In fact, I was continually laboring against myself. Every exertion made by myself for the benefit of "Graham," by rendering that Mag. a greater source of profit, rendered its owner at the same time less willing to keep his word with me. At the time of our bargain (a verbal one) he had 6000 subscribers — when I left him he had more than 40,000. It is no wonder that he has been tempted to leave me in the lurch.

I had nearly 1000 subscribers with which to have started the "Penn," and, with these as a beginning, it would have been my own fault had I failed. There may be still three or four hundred who will stand by me, of the old list, and, in the interval between this period and the first of January, I will use every endeavor to procure others. You are aware that, in my circumstances, a single name, *in advance*, is worth ten after the issue of the book; for it is upon my list of subscribers that I must depend for the bargain to be made with a partner possessing capital, or with a publisher. If, therefore, you can aid me in Alexandria, with even a single name, I shall feel deeply indebted to your friendship.

I feel that *now* is the time to strike. The delay, after all, will do me no injury. My conduct of "Graham" has rendered me better and (I hope) more favorably known than before. I am anxious, above all things, to render the journal one in which the *true*, in contradistinction from the merely factitious, genius of the country shall be represented. I shall yield nothing to great names — nor to the circumstances of position. I shall make war to the knife against the New England assumption of "All

the decency and all the talent" which has been so disgustingly manifested in the Rev. Rufus W. Griswold's "Poets and Poetry of America." But I am boring you with my egotism. May I hope to hear from you in reply?

I am, with sincere respect and esteem,

Your ob't Servt., EDGAR A. POE.[1]

DANL. BRYAN, Esq., Alexandria, D. C.

P. S. I have not seen the "attack" to which you have reference. Could it have been in a Philadelphia paper?

A month previously, on June 6, Poe had written to Chivers the same account of the matter. Their correspondence had languished because of an unfavorable notice of Chivers in "Autography"; but to his remonstrances, even when repeated, Poe had not replied. Now he apologized, and suggested that Chivers should join in the enterprise, and furnish the capital. Chivers was about to take possession of his share of his father's estate, and postponed decision as to the matter of investment, at the same time thanking Poe, for whom he had an

[1] *The Critic*, April 16, 1892. The original is in the Iowa State Library.

intense admiration; meanwhile he limited his support to a promise to secure subscribers.

Poe publicly announced[1] the "Penn" at once, and addressed his friends and acquaintances through a new Prospectus, and besought them to obtain subscriptions, of which he needed five hundred. As before, "The Penn Magazine" was to be original, fearless, and independent, and would in particular open its columns to merit instead of mushroom reputations, and would be distinguished by criticism instead of puffery. To Washington Poe, another of his Georgia relatives, he wrote, in August, that he would issue the first number in the next January, with the hope that he might serve truth and advance American literature, and that fortune and fame would now come to him hand in hand.[2]

Meanwhile Poe still sought office, though despondently, and again wrote Thomas: —

PHILADELPHIA, August 27, '42.

MY DEAR THOMAS, — How happens it that I have received not a line from you for these four months? What in the world is the matter? I

[1] *The New York Mirror*, July 30, 1842.

[2] Poe to Washington Poe, August 15, 1842, Gill p. 114.

write to see if you are still in the land of the living, or have gone your way to the "land o' the leal."

I wrote a few words to you, about two months since, from New York, at the importunate demand of W. Wallace, in which you were requested to use your influence, &c. He overlooked me while I wrote, & therefore I could not speak of private matters. I presume you gave the point as much consideration as it demanded, & no more.

What have you been doing for so long a time? I am anxious to learn how you succeed in Washington. I suppose Congress will have adjourned by the time you get this. Since I heard from you I have had a reiteration of the promise, about the Custom-House appointment, from Rob Tyler. A friend of mine, Mr. Jas. Herron, having heard from me casually, that I had some hope of an appointment, called upon R. T., who assured him that I should *certainly* have it & desired him so to inform me. I have, also, paid my respects to Gen. J. W. Tyson, the leader of the T. party in the city, who seems especially well disposed — but, notwithstanding *all this*, I have my doubts. A few days will end them. If I do not get the office, I am just where I started. No-

thing more can be done to secure it than has been already done. Literature is at a sad discount. There is really nothing to be done in this way. Without an international copyright law, American authors may as well cut their throats. A good magazine, of the true stamp, would do wonders in the way of a general revivification of letters, or the law. We must have — both if possible.

What has become of Dow? Do you ever see him?

Write immediately & tell me the Washington news.

My poor little wife still continues ill. I have scarcely a faint hope of her recovery.

Remember us all to your friends & believe me your true friend,

EDGAR A. POE.[1]

F. W. THOMAS, Esq.

Thomas soon visited the Poes in Philadelphia, and received a parting note: —

PHILADELPHIA, September [21], 1842.

MY DEAR THOMAS, — I am afraid you will think that I keep my promises but indifferently

[1] Poe to Thomas, MS.

well, since I failed to make my appearance at Congress Hall on Sunday, and I now, therefore, write to apologize. The will to be with you was not wanting — but, upon reaching home on Saturday night, I was taken with a severe chill and fever — the latter keeping me company all next day. I found myself too ill to venture out, but, nevertheless, would have done so had I been able to obtain the consent of all parties. As it was, I was quite in a quandary, for we kept no servant and no messenger could be procured in the neighborhood. I contented myself with the reflection that you would not think it necessary to wait for me very long after nine o'clock, and that you were not quite so implacable in your resentments as myself. I was much in hope that you would have made your way out in the afternoon. Virginia and Mrs. C[lemm] were much grieved at not being able to bid you farewell.

I perceive by Du Solle's paper that you saw him. He announced your presence in the city on Sunday in very handsome terms. I am about going on a pilgrimage this morning, to hunt up a copy of "Clinton Bradshaw," and will send it to you as soon as procured.

Excuse the brevity of this letter, for I am still

very unwell, and believe me most gratefully and sincerely, Your friend,

EDGAR A. POE.[1]

On his return to Washington, Thomas interested himself further in the old scheme to obtain an appointment in the Custom House at Philadelphia. The *dénouement* was now at hand. Poe told it to his friend.

PHILADELPHIA, November 19, 1842.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — Your letter of the 14th gave me new hope — only to be dashed to the ground. On the day of its receipt, some of the papers announced four removals and appointments. Among the latter I observed the name — Pogue. Upon inquiry among those behind the curtain, I soon found that no such person as — Pogue had any expectation of an appointment, and that the name was a misprint or rather a misunderstanding of the reporters, who had heard *my own* name spoken of at the Custom House. I waited two days, without calling on Mr. Smith, as he had twice told me that "he would send for me when he wished to swear me in." To-day, however, hearing nothing from him, I called. I asked him if he had no good

[1] Griswold MSS.

news for me yet. He replied, "No, I am instructed to make no more removals." At this, being much astonished, I mentioned that I had heard, through a friend, from Mr. Rob Tyler, that he was requested to appoint me. At these words he said roughly, — "From *whom* did you say?" I replied, "From Mr. Robert Tyler." I wish you could have seen the scoundrel, — for scoundrel, my dear Thomas, in your private ear, *he is*, — "From *Robert* Tyler!" says he — "Hem! I have received orders from *President* Tyler to make no more appointments, and shall make none." Immediately afterward, he acknowledged that he had made one appointment *since* these instructions.

Mr. Smith has excited the thorough disgust of every Tyler man here. He is a Whig of the worst stamp, and will appoint none but Whigs if he can possibly avoid it. People here laugh at the idea of his being a Tyler man. He is notoriously not such. As for me, he has treated me most shamefully. In my case, there was no need of any political shuffling or lying. I proffered my willingness to postpone my claims to those of political claimants, but he told me, upon my first interview after the election, that if I would call on the fourth day he would swear

me in. I called and he was not at home. On the next day I called again and saw him, when he told me that he would send a messenger for me when ready: this without even inquiring my place of residence, showing that he had, from the first, no design of appointing me. Well, I waited nearly a month, when, finding nearly all the appointments made, I again called. He did not even ask me to be seated — scarcely spoke — muttered the words "I will *send* for you, Mr. Poe" — and that was all. My next and last interview was to-day — as I have just described. The whole *manner* of the man, from the first, convinced me that he would not appoint me if he could help it. Hence the uneasiness I expressed to you when here. Now, my dear Thomas, this insult is not *to me*, so much as to your friend Mr. Robert Tyler, who was so kind as to promise, and who requested, my appointment.

It seems to me that the only way to serve me *now* is to lay the matter once again before Mr. Tyler, and, if possible through him, to procure a few lines *from the President*, directing Mr. Smith to give me the place. With these credentials he would scarcely again refuse. But I leave all to your better judgment.

You can have no idea of the low ruffians and boobies — men, too, without a shadow of political influence or *caste* — who have received office over my head. If Smith had the feelings of a gentleman, he would have perceived that, from the very character of my claim, — by which I mean my *want* of claim, — he should have made my appointment an early one. It was a gratuitous favor intended me by Mr. Rob Tyler, and he (Smith) has done *his* best to deprive this favor of all its grace by delay. I could have forgiven all but the innumerable and altogether *unnecessary* falsehoods with which he insulted my common sense day after day.

I would write more, my dear Thomas, but my heart is too heavy. You have felt the misery of hope deferred, and will feel for me.

Believe me ever your true friend,

EDGAR A. POE.[1]

Write soon, and if possible relieve my suspense. You cannot imagine the trouble I am in, and have been in for the past two months — unable to enter into any literary arrangements, or in fact to do anything, being in hourly expectation of getting the place.

[1] Frederickson MSS.

The published work of Poe after he left "Graham's" was slight, as was always the case when he was an unattached writer and could not command an immediate channel of publication. He contributed to Miss Leslie's annual, "The Gift," for 1843, "The Pit and the Pendulum," a tale of no striking originality, and in October to "Graham's" his long delayed article on "Rufus Dawes," in which at last he took satirical vengeance on that poetaster. "Snowden's Lady's Companion," a weaker and less prominent magazine, was a new resource; there he published in the same month "The Landscape Garden," and in November, December, and February "The Mystery of Marie Roget."

He had turned his attention to Boston and was desirous to make his name better known there. He sent the last-named tale, in the preceding June, 1842, to the "Boston Mammoth Notion," expressing this desire to the editor,[1] and later a tale "The Tell-Tale Heart," to the "Boston Miscellany"; and in the fall he addressed James Russell Lowell, who had several times been praised by him incidentally and who was about to issue a new periodical, "The Pioneer," in that city. This correspondence now takes

[1] Poe to Roberts, *The Virginia Poe*, xvii, 112, 113.

the place of that of Snodgrass and Thomas as a source of light upon his affairs and character: —

DR SIR, — Learning your design of commencing a Magazine in Boston, upon the first of January next, I take the liberty of asking whether some arrangement might not be made by which I should become a regular contributor.

I should be glad to furnish a short article each month — of such character as might be suggested by yourself — and upon such terms as you could afford "in the beginning."

That your success will be marked and permanent I will not doubt. At all events, I most sincerely wish you well: for no man in America has excited in me so much admiration — and, therefore, none so much of respect and esteem — as the author of "Rosaline."

May I hope to hear from you at your leisure? In the meantime, believe me

Most cordially yours,

EDGAR ALLAN POE.[1]

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, Esqre.
PHILADELPHIA, November, 16, 1842.

Lowell immediately replied: —

[1] Lowell MSS.

THE MYSTERY OF MARIE ROGET

BOSTON, November 19, 1842.
No. 4 Court St.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — Your letter has given me great pleasure in two ways: — first, as it assures me of the friendship and approbation of almost the only *fearless* American critic, and second (to be Irish) since it contains your acquiescence to a request which I had already many times mentally preferred to you. Had you not written you would soon have heard from me. I give you *carte blanche* for prose or verse as may best please you — with one exception — namely, I do not wish an article like that of yours on [Rufus] Dawes, who, although I think with you that he is a bad *poet*, has yet I doubt not tender feelings as a man which I should be chary of wounding. I think that I shall be hardest pushed for good stories (imaginative ones) & if you are inspired to anything of the kind I should be glad to get it.

I thank you for your kind consideration as to terms of payment, seeing that herein my ability does not come near my exuberant will. But I can offer you $10 for every article at first with the understanding that, as soon as I am able, I shall pay you more according to my opinion of your deserts. If the magazine fail,

I shall consider myself personally responsible to all my contributors. Let me hear from you at your earliest convenience & believe me always your friend,

J. R. LOWELL.[1]

E. A. POE, Esq.

I am already (I mean my magazine) in the press — but anything sent "*right away*" will be in season for the first number, in which I should like to have you appear.

Poe appears to have replied by placing "The Tell-Tale Heart" at Lowell's disposal, and received the following answer: —

BOSTON, December 17, 1842.
No. 4 Court St.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I ought to have written to you before, but I have had so much to distract me, & so much to make me sick of pen & ink I *could not*. Your story of "The Telltale Heart" will appear in my first number. Mr. [Henry Theodore] Tuckerman (perhaps your chapter on Autographs is to blame) would not print it in the "Miscellany," & I was very glad to get it for myself. It may argue presumptuousness in me to dissent from his verdict. I should be glad

[1] Griswold MSS.

to hear from you soon. You must send me another article, as my second number will soon go to press.

Wishing you all happiness I remain your true friend — torn to pieces with little businesses[1] —

[Signature cut out.]

The correspondence was continued by Poe: —

[Not dated — mailed December 25, 1842.]

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I send you a brief poem for No. 2, with my best wishes.

I duly received yours of the 19th and thank you for reversing the judgment of Mr. Tuckerman, — the author of the "Spirit of Poesy," — which, by the way, is somewhat of a misnomer —since no spirit appears.

Touching the "Miscellany" — had I known of Mr. T.'s accession, I should not have ventured to send an article. Should he, at any time, accept an effusion of mine, I should ask myself what twattle I had been perpetrating, so flat as to come within the scope of his approbation. He writes, through his publishers, — "If Mr. Poe would condescend to furnish more quiet articles he would be a most desirable correspondent." All I have to say is that if Mr. T. persists in his

[1] Griswold MSS.

quietude, he will put a quietus on the Magazine of which Mess. Bradbury & Soden have been so stupid as to give him control.

I am all anxiety to see your first number. In the meantime believe me,[1]

[Signature torn off.]

PHILADELPHIA, February 4, 1843.

MY DEAR MR. LOWELL, — For some weeks I have been daily proposing to write and congratulate you upon the triumphant début of the "Pioneer," but have been prevented by a crowd of more worldly concerns.

Thank you for the compliment in the footnote. Thank you, also, for your attention in forwarding the Magazine.

As far as a $3 Magazine can please me at all, I am delighted with yours. I am especially gratified with what seems to me a certain coincidence of opinion and of taste, between yourself and your humble servant, in the minor arrangements, as well as in the more important details of the journal, for example, — the poetry in the same type as the prose — the designs from Flaxman — &c. As regards the contributors our thoughts are one. Do you know that when, some time

[1] Lowell MSS.

since, I dreamed of establishing a Magazine of my own, I said to myself — "If I can but succeed in engaging, as permanent contributors, Mr. Hawthorne, Mr. Neal, and two others, with a certain young poet of Boston, who shall be nameless, I will engage to produce the best journal in America." At the same time, while I thought, and still think highly of Mr. Bryant, Mr. Cooper, and others, I said nothing of *them.*

You have many warm friends in this city — but the reforms you propose require time in their development, and it may be even a year before "The Pioneer" will make due impression among the Quakers. In the meantime, persevere.

I forwarded you, about a fortnight ago I believe, by Harnden's Express, an article called "Notes upon English Verse." A thought has struck me, that it may prove too long, or perhaps too dull, for your Magazine — in either case, use no ceremony, but return it in the same mode (thro' Harnden) and I will, forthwith, send something in its place.

I duly received, from Mr. Graham, $10 on your account, for which I am obliged. I would prefer, however, that you would remit directly to myself through the P. Office.

I saw, not long ago, at Graham's, a poem

without the author's name — but which for many reasons I take to be yours — the chief being that it was *very* beautiful. Its title I forget, but it slightly veiled a lovely Allegory — in which "Religion" was typified, and the whole painted the voyage of some wanderers and mourners in search of some far-off isle. Is it yours? Truly your friend,

E. A. Poe.[1]

To this period belongs the story of Poe's early relations with Griswold, his successor in "Graham's," in May, 1842. Rufus Wilmot Griswold was then a young man of twenty-seven years, who had sometime before left the Baptist ministry for the more attractive walks of literature. He had published both sermons and songs, and had served on several newspapers in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia: latterly he had been engaged in compiling and publishing his popular volume, "The Poets and Poetry of America," — that *Hic Jacet* of American mediocrities of the first generation. Poe had just become the editor of "Graham's" when he heard of Griswold's intention to set in order the "American Parnassus": but he was not widely

[1] Lowell MSS.

known as a poet, — in fact, he had practically abandoned poetry in late years. He was, however, fond of his early verses, and he was never known to omit any opportunity of public notice. It was natural, therefore, that shortly after the announcement of Griswold's venture early in 1841 he should call on him for the purpose of securing admission among Apollo's candidates.

PHILADELPHIA, March 29, 1841.

R. W. GRISWOLD, Esq.:

My dear Sir,— On the other leaf I send such poems as I think my best, from which you can select any which please your fancy. I should be proud to see one or two of them in your book. The one called "The Haunted Palace" is that of which I spoke in reference to Professor Longfellow's plagiarism. I first published the "H. P." in Brooks' "Museum," a monthly journal at Baltimore, now dead. Afterwards I embodied it in a tale called "The House of Usher," in Burton's Magazine. Here it was, I suppose, that Professor Longfellow saw it: for, about six weeks afterwards, there appeared in the "Southern Literary Messenger" a poem by him called "The Beleaguered City," which may now be found in his volume. The identity in title is

striking; for by "The Haunted Palace" I mean to imply a mind haunted by phantoms — a disordered brain — and by the "Beleaguered City," Prof. L. means just the same. But the whole tournure of the poem is based upon mine, as you will see at once. Its allegorical conduct, the style of its versification and expression — all are mine. As I understood you to say that you meant to preface each set of poems by some biographical notice, I have ventured to send you the above memoranda — the particulars of which (in a case where an author is so little known as myself) might not be easily obtained elsewhere. "The Coliseum" was the prize poem alluded to.

With high respect, I am your obedient servant,

EDGAR A. POE.[1]

When, a year later, the unexpected meeting in Graham's office took place, the incident caused no rupture in the friendly relations of the two men. In April Griswold's long-expected volume had been issued, and Poe offered to review it for him. What then occurred is told by Poe. September 12, 1842, he wrote to Thomas as follows: —

"Graham has made me a good offer to return.

[1] Griswold, xxi.

He is not especially pleased with Griswold, nor is any one else, with the exception of the Rev. gentleman himself, who has gotten himself into quite a hornet's nest by his 'Poets and Poetry.' It appears you gave him personal offence by *delay* in replying to his demand for information touching Mrs. Welby, I believe, or somebody else. Hence his omission of you in the body of the book; for he had prepared quite a long article from my MS., and had selected several pages for quotation. He is a pretty fellow to set himself up for an *honest* judge, or even as a capable one. About two months since, we were talking of the book, when I said that I thought of reviewing it in full for the 'Democratic Review,' but found my design anticipated by an article from that ass O'Sullivan, and that I knew no other work in which a notice would be readily admissible. Griswold said, in reply: 'You need not trouble yourself about the *publication* of the review, should you decide on writing it, for I will attend to all that. I will get it in some reputable work, and look to it for the usual pay, in the meantime handing you whatever your charge would be.' This, you see, was an ingenious insinuation of *a bribe* to puff his book. I accepted his offer forthwith, and wrote the review, handed it to him,

and received from him the compensation; he never daring to look over the MS. in my presence, and taking it for granted that all was right. But that review has not yet appeared, and I am doubtful if it ever will. I wrote it precisely as I would have written under ordinary circumstances, and be sure there was no predominance of praise."[1]

The incident did not break their relations, and Poe again wrote to Griswold with regard to reviewing the volume during the winter: —

[Undated, 1842–43.]

My dear Sir, — I made use of your name with Carey & Hart, for a copy of your book, and am writing a review of it, which I shall send to Lowell for "The Pioneer." I like it decidedly. It is of immense importance, as a guide to what we have done; but you have permitted your good nature to influence you to a degree. I would have omitted at least a dozen whom you have quoted, and I can think of five or six that should have been in. But with all its faults — you see I am perfectly frank with you — it is a better book

[1] Poe to Thomas, Stoddard, xcvii, xcviii. The same story is told by English, who had it from Poe. English to W. M. Griswold, January 10, 1895, *The Virginia Poe*, xviii, 437.

than any other man in the United States could have made of the materials. This I will say.

With high respect, I am your obedient servant,

EDGAR A. POE.[1]

The project of the "Penn," which seems to have languished, was perhaps the occasion of a proposal vaguely entertained by Foster, editor of the "Aurora," to start a magazine in New York under Poe's charge; and Poe apparently considered Graham's offer for his return. None of these plans came to anything; but in the winter Poe succeeded in interesting Mr. Thomas C. Clarke, the owner of the Philadelphia "Saturday Museum," a weekly paper, and about the beginning of the new year, 1843, the two entered into a partnership for the publication of a new periodical, which it was thought best to call "The Stylus."

[1] Griswold MSS. The remainder of the story belongs to the end of the year.

ELEONORA

NOTES MAINLY ON OBSCURE OR CONTROVERTED POINTS

VOL. I

Page 1. Poe's Birth. The statement in the text rests, as regards the place, on the evidence of Poe's mother (i, 14) and his own statements on enlisting in the army (War Department Records), on the title-page of "Tamerlane" (i, 39), and in the *Broadway Journal* (Nov. 1, 1845); as regards the date, on the entry in the matriculation book of the University of Virginia; as regards both place and date, corroboration is found in several contemporary Boston notices of which the following is one, — "We congratulate the frequenters of the Theatre on the recovery of Mrs. Poe from her recent confinement. This charming little Actress will make her reappearance To-morrow Evening," etc. (*Boston Gazette*, Feb. 9, 1809). The house in which he was born was, probably, 33 Hollis Street, the street address of his father in the Boston Tax Records for 1808, where the entry reads, "33 Poo David 1 [poll-tax] Actor Hollis." The house was valued at $800, and owned by Henry Haviland; David Poe was rated as having $600 personal estate. The entry is for May 1, 1808; no entry occurs for 1809, owing to the fact that David Poe left Boston late in May of that year. The facts of the record are fully stated and discussed in the *Boston Herald*, Jan. 14, 1909. The spelling "Poo" is phonetic and represents the Southern pronunciation, which gives point to the pun told in "The Virginia Poe" (i, 312): "On one occasion a friend found him lying on the wayside — intoxicated. As he approached him he exclaimed: 'Why, Edgar Poe!' when Poe looked at him and replied: 'No; poor Edgar.'"

The above evidence is conclusive, but is still challenged. Poe himself gave the year-date as 1811 (memorandum for Griswold, March 29, 1841), and the entire date as Dec. 1813 (Poe to Griswold, June, 1849). Mrs. Weiss (p. 11) prints a letter from a daughter of Mrs. MacKenzie in which the writer states that Poe told her he was born Oct. 12, 1808, which date Mrs. Weiss consequently accepts. Neilson Poe, by mistake possibly, as no family record exists, gave the date Jan. 20, 1809; and Stoddard, in his memoir, relying on an incomplete examination of the announcements of the theatre in Boston, conjectured and gave the date Feb. 19, 1809. A gentleman of Norfolk, Mr. Forrest, maintains that Poe was born in that city, during the stay of the latter's parents there, at the Forrest homestead, where the family had been kindly received and had found a temporary home; it is not unlikely that this tradition refers to the birth of Rosalie, in 1810. Lastly, Miss Elisabeth Ellicott Poe ("Poe, The Weird Genius, An Authentic and Intimate Account of the Personality and Life of the most Tragic Figure in American Literary History, Written by a Member of His Own Family," *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, Feb. 1909) states that Poe was born Jan. 19, 1809, in "Baltimore, at No. 9 Front St., then a theatrical boarding-house kept by a Mrs. Beard"; she gives a long list of authorities, including "the better-informed American biographers."

Page 14. THEATRICAL HISTORY OF THE POES. The outline given in the text is based on the following memoranda, which were made, not with a view to a complete account of the careers involved, but to showing the sequence of engagements and the character of the acting.

1796. BOSTON, Federal Theatre. Feb. 12 (first appearance of Mrs. Arnold); she also played or sang, Feb. 19, 26; March 7, 14, 18, 21, 23, 30; April 1, 13, 15 (benefit), 20, 25; May 4, 11, 13, 16; June 1, Concert (first appearance of Miss Arnold).

PORTLAND, Maine. Nov. 21, Concert. "Mrs. Tubbs, Late Mrs. Arnold of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, who arrived from England last January and now from the Boston Theatre . . . after which Mr. Tubbs intends setting up a Theatre." (*Eastern Herald*, Nov. 17, 1796.) Theatre, Dec. 8, 9, 12, 19 (Miss Arnold's benefit), 30 (Mrs. Tubbs's benefit).

1797. Jan. 12 (Miss Arnold's benefit), 13 (Mr. Tubbs's benefit).

NEW YORK. Old John St. Theatre. Solee's Company of Boston and Charleston Comedians. Aug. 18, Miss Arnold (*Maria*) in "The Spoiled Child"; Aug. 20, Mrs. (*sic*) Arnold (*Agnes*) and Mrs. Tubbs (*Zorayda*) in "The Mountaineers."

CHARLESTON, South Carolina. Nov. 9 (first appearance of Mrs. Tubbs "on this stage"), 13, 14, 18 (first appearance of Miss Arnold), 27, 29 (first appearance of Mr. Tubbs); Dec. 4 (Miss Arnold in "The Adopted Child," often repeated), 6 (Miss Arnold as *Duke of York* in "Richard III"), 23 (Miss Arnold as *Cupid* in "The Magic Chamber, or Harlequin Protected by Cupid."

1798. Jan. 12, 15, 16 (all "The Adopted Child"); Feb. 5 (Miss Arnold as *Child*), 9 (as *dancing nymph*, in "Americania Eleutheria — a Musical and Allegorical Masque"), 13, 24, 26; April 9 ("The Charleston Theatre will be reopened on the 9th inst. with a company entitled the Charleston Comedians," *City Gazette*, April 4, 1798); 20 (Miss Arnold sings), April 30 (Miss Arnold, "Farewell Address written by an American gentleman"); April 23, Mrs. Tubbs (benefit). This is the last theatrical mention of Mrs. Tubbs. Mr. J. N. Ireland suggested that she died at Charleston, "where the yellow fever about that period carried off many English performers."

(Ireland to the author, June 9, 1883.) Mr. Tubbs also is no more heard of.

1799. PHILADELPHIA. March 14 (first appearance of Mr. Hopkins); April 29 (Miss Arnold's benefit with Mr. Warral); May 7 (Miss Arnold's benefit with Mrs. Snowden and Miss Solomons). The season closed about May 20, and opened Dec. 4.

1800. WASHINGTON. The Philadelphia Company. United States Theatre. Sept 5 (Miss Arnold in dancing and singing parts; Mr. Hopkins (*Charles*) in "The Village Lawyer"), 6 (Mr. Hopkins (*Jacob*) in "The Road to Ruin," and Comic Song in "The Rural Rumpus"; Miss Arnold (*Milliner*) in latter). Miss Arnold is mentioned in Philadelphia from Oct. 1 to Dec. 8.

1801. PHILADELPHIA. New Theatre, March 2, 11, 13 (Mr. Hopkins, the Ushers, and Miss Arnold in very minor parts). NORFOLK, Virginia. May (*circa*), Mr. Hopkins. PHILADELPHIA, Southwark. Aug. 28, Miss Arnold (*Tomboy*) in "The Romp"; Sept. 7, 25.

1802. March 22; April 7 (Miss Arnold's benefit with Mr. Usher and Mrs. Snowden); BALTIMORE, Maryland, June 4 (*ditto*). NORFOLK, Virginia, March 1, 10, 17, 31, until May 9, or later, Mr. Hopkins played. Miss Arnold married Mr. Hopkins between June 4 and Aug. 11, and joined the Virginia Comedians. ALEXANDRIA, Virginia, Aug. 11–Sept. (Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins). PETERSBURG, Virginia, Nov. 20–Dec. 7.

1803. NORFOLK, June 8. RICHMOND, July 23 (concert). CHARLESTON, Dec. 1 (first appearance of Mr. Poe), 5, 7, 9, 10, and till end of the season in the following spring, Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins not being in the company.

1804. PETERSBURG, Nov. 3–20 (Mr. and Mrs. Hokpins, Mr. Poe).

1805. NORFOLK, March 19–June 12 (*ditto*). WASHINGTON, Mr. Green's Theatre, newly fitted up; Sept. 9 (Mrs. Hopkins), 25 (Mr. Poe), Oct. 2, 4, 7 (Mr. Hopkins's benefit). Oct. 26, Mr. Hopkins died. Nov. 6 (Mrs. Hopkins's benefit). The theatre closed about Dec. 25.

1806. RICHMOND, Feb. (Mr. and Mrs. Poe). PETERSBURG, April 19, 27 (Mrs. Poe). PHILADELPHIA, June 20 (Mr. Poe, "first appearance at Philadelphia," and Mrs. Poe, "first appearance for five years, formerly Miss Arnold," —eight performances in comedy). NEW YORK, Vauxhall Garden, July 16 (Mrs. Poe in "The Romp"), 18 (Mr. Poe, *Frank*, in "Fortune's Frolic"). BOSTON, Federal Theatre (mainly in comic after-pieces and songs); Oct. 13, 17, 20, 24, 27, 31; Nov. 3, 7, 10, 14, 17, 19, 21, 24; Dec. 1, 5, 8 (bills not full), 26, 29.

1807. Jan. 12; Feb. 22, 25; March 2 (Mrs. Poe, *Cordelia* to Fennell's *Lear*), 13 (*Blanche* to *King John*), 20, 23, 26, 30; April 13, 17, 20 (Mrs. Poe's benefit), 24 (*Ariel*); May 8, 11, 15, 18, 22, 25. The season reopened Sept. 14. Sept. 18 (Mrs. Poe); Oct. 26, 30 (*Ophelia* to Fennell's *Hamlet*); Nov. 5, 27; Dec. 4.

1808. Jan. 1, 4, 8, 29 (*Ophelia* to Cooper's *Hamlet*); Feb. 1 (*Cordelia* to Cooper's *Lear*), 15, 26; March 7, 14, 21 (Mrs. Poe's benefit in "Virgin of the Sun"), 25, 30 (Mrs. Poe in "The Wood Demon"); April 8, 14, 18 (Mrs. Poe's benefit in "The Robbers"), 25. The season reopened Sept. 26. Nov. 4 (Mrs. Poe sings), 11, 14, 18; Dec. 12, 19, 26.

1809. Jan. 6, 9, 13, 20 (Mrs. Poe in all as *peasant* in pantomime of "The Brazen Mask"); Feb. 10, 13, 15, 22, 24; March 1, 6, 13, 15, 20, 24; April 3 (Payne's first appearance at the age of seventeen), 5 (*Palmyra* to Payne's *Zaphna*), 7 (*Juliet* to his *Romeo*), 14 (*Sigismunda* to his *Tancred*), 17 (*Ophelia* to his *Hamlet*), 19 (Mrs. Poe's

benefit, *Cora* in "Pizarro"), 21, 24; May 1, 5, 8, 10, 12. Season closed. May 16, Concert at Exchange Coffee House (Mrs. Poe sings). NEW YORK, Park Theatre, Sept. 6, 8, 27; Nov. 27; Dec. 6.

1810. March 5; April 27; May 16; June 13, 29. The season closed July 4.

1811. CHARLESTON, April (Mrs. Poe's benefit in "The Wonder"). NORFOLK, July 26 (Mrs. Poe's benefit, *ditto*). RICHMOND, Aug.–Oct. (Mrs. Poe's benefit); Nov. 29, second benefit for the aid of Mrs. Poe, then suffering her last illness.

Other pieces in which Mrs. Poe acted in Boston, in her last season, besides those mentioned above, were "Abaellino" (*Rosamunda*), "False Alarms" (*Emily*), "Two Faces under a Hood" (*Antonia*), "Gustavus Vasa" (*Cristina*), "Feudal Times" (*Rachæl*), "The Miser" (*Marianne*), "False Delicacy" (*Mrs. Marchmont*), and "Lover's Vows" (*Amelia*). In New York, 1809–10, though but few dates are noted, she played the entire season as a leading actress; she repeated the serious parts, *Desdemona*, *Juliet*, and *Ophelia*, and also played *Cora*, *Angela* in the "Castle Spectre," and *Imma* in "Adelgitha"; the comic or musical pieces she appeared in were "The Exile" (*Catherine*), "Beaux Stratagem" (*Cherry*), "Children in the Wood" (*Josephine*), "Little Pickle," Fontainbleau (*Dolly Ball*), "No Song, No Supper" (*Margaretta*), "Morgiana" (forty times), "The Romp" (*Priscilla Tomboy*), "Foundling of the Forest" (*Rosabella*), "Rosina, Princess or no Princess" (*Elizene*), "Merchant of Venice" (*Jessica*), "Agreeable Surprise" (*Laura*).

The criticism of Mr. and Mrs. Poe, in Boston, varied; other passages besides those quoted will be found in *The Polyanthus* (by Buckingham), Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec., 1806, March, April, June, 1807; in *The Emerald*, Nov. 8, 1806, Jan. 3, 9, 1807; *The* (Philadelphia) *Theatrical Censor*, Boston letter, Nov. 15, 22,

1806; *Boston Gazette*, April 18, 1808. In New York their comparative failure to take the position they aspired to must be inferred from the fact that they were not reëngaged. The judgment of Ireland, in a private letter, seems just: "Mrs. Poe undoubtedly both in Boston and New York played some leading tragic characters, but her best efforts, I imagine, were in musical parts and light comedy." Cf. a curious apocryphal sketch, *The New York Mercury*, Jan. 26, 1884.

A pendant to the similar notices in the text has lately been found at Norfolk, being a letter of a correspondent, "Floretta," to the *Norfolk Herald*, July 26, 1811, on the occasion of Mrs. Poe's last benefit there. It shows both the dark and the bright side of her stage career: —

" . . . And now, Sir, permit me to call the attention of the public to the benefit of Mrs. Poe and Miss Thomas for this evening, and their claims on the liberality of the Norfolk audience are not small. The former of these ladies, I remember (just as I was going in my teens) on her first appearance here, met with the most unbounded applause. She was said to be one of the handsomest women in America; she was certainly the handsomest I had ever seen. She never came on the stage but a general murmur ran through the house, 'What an enchanting creature! Heavens, what a form! What an animated and expressive Countenance! How well she performs! Her voice, too! Sure never anything was half so sweet!' Year after year she continued to extract these involuntary bursts of rapture from the Norfolk audience, and to deserve them too; for never did one of her profession take more pains to please than she. But now, 'the scene is changed,' — Misfortunes have pressed heavy on her. Left alone, the only support of herself and several young children — Friendless and unprotected she no longer commands the admiration she formerly did. Shame on the world that can turn its back on the same person in distress that it was wont to cherish in prosperity. And yet she is as

assiduous to please as ever, and though grief may have stolen a few of the roses from her cheeks, still she retains the same sweetness of expression and symmetry of form and feature. She this evening hazards a benefit, in the pleasing hope that the people of Norfolk will remember past services. And can they remember, and not requite them generously? . . .

"FLORETTA."

Page 29. POE'S RICHMOND CONNECTIONS. The epitaphs of the Allan household are as follows: "John Allan, died March 27, 1834, in the 54th year of his age. A native of Ayrshire, Scotland. Frances Keeling Allan, wife of John Allan, died on the morning of the 28th of February, 1829. Louisa G. Allan, daughter of John W. and Louisa De Hart Patterson and widow of John Allan. Born in New York, March 24, 1800. Died in Richmond, Va., April 24, 1881. Anne Moore Valentine, died 25th January, 1850, in the 63d year of her age." The same source gives the dates of the Stanard family: "Jane Stith Stanard . . . departed this life on the 28th of April, in the year 1824, in the 31st year of her age. . . . Robert Stanard, born 17th Aug. 1781, died 14th May, 1846. . . . Robert Craig Stanard . . . born on the 7th of May, 1814 and died in Richmond on the 2d of June, 1857." The last two years of her life Mrs. Stanard led secluded in her family. Poe was therefore about thirteen and his companion eight when he saw her often, as Mrs. Clemm avers, or if he saw her only "once," as he told Mrs. Whitman, within "a few weeks" of her death, he was fifteen and his companion ten.

Page 34. Poe was not concerned in this gambling episode, much less was he a leader. "The little mountain was a convenient place of rendezvous," wrote one of the participants to the author (June 2, 1884); "there was no need of leaders, but Poe would have been too light for that post among the Beales and Slaughters and Gholsons of the period." This incident and Poe's life at Charlottesville in general are narrated

fully by John S. Patton, librarian ("Poe at the University," *New York Times*, Dec. 5, 1908). The statement by Hirst gives Poe's version of his university career, and it seems a reasonable account: "The manners of the Institution, at that time were exceedingly dissolute, and he fell in with the general course. He managed, however, to maintain a position with the Professors. He attended lectures at random, and spent his time, partly in the debating societies, where he soon grew noted as a debater, partly in solitary rambles among the mountains of the Blue Ridge, and partly in covering the walls of his dormitory with crayon drawings, caricaturing the Faculty. This dissipated course of life brought with it, however, a natural disgust, and, toward the close of his University career, arousing himself to better things, he took the first honors of the college, without any difficulty, and returned home." (*Saturday Museum*, *loc. cit.*) What is described as "the first honors" was a record for excellence in Latin and French, shared equally with a few other students.

Page 37. POE'S ALLEGED VOYAGE IN 1827. The manner of Poe's departure from Richmond briefly narrated in the text is told by Mrs. Weiss (p. 50) more fully. Hirst ("Edgar Allan Poe," *Saturday Museum*, March 4, 1843) gave the first printed statement; and as regards his sketch, from which I make several extracts, it should be remembered in each instance that Poe was the sole source of its information, that he corrected the proofs in his own hand, and that he furnished it to Lowell as the original source for the latter's sketch in 1845. Hirst says, the passage following immediately on that already quoted with regard to Poe's university life: "His good resolutions, however, had come somewhat too late, for he had already become involved in difficulties, which resulted in his leaving home. With a young friend, Ebenezer Burling (*sic*), he endeavored to make his way, with scarcely a dollar in his pocket, to Greece, with the wild design of aiding in the Revolution then taking place.

Burling soon repented his folly, and gave up the design when he had scarcely entered on the expedition: Mr. Poe persevered, but did not succeed in reaching the scene of action; he proceeded, however, to St. Petersburgh, where, through deficiency of passport, he became involved in serious difficulties, from which he was finally extricated by the American Consul. He returned to America only in time to learn the severe illness of Mrs. Allan, who, in character, was the reverse of her husband, and whom he sincerely loved. He reached Richmond on the night after her burial."

Mr. J. H. Whitty, of Richmond, gives the following account (Richmond *Times-Despatch*, Jan. 17, 1909) from his own notes derived from the notes of Judge R. W. Hughes, of Virginia, "who had taken notes from Poe's own statements [apparently in 1848–49] and in addition had the important sketch of Poe's close associate, F. W. Thomas." No sketch by Thomas has ever been known; and the reference is clearly to Hirst's sketch, owned by Thomas. Mr. Whitty writes: —

(Copyright, J. H. Whitty, 1909.)

"He had talked with the owner of a vessel trading with Ellis & Allan's firm, and determined to work his way to the Old World in same. His idea was that when he reached London he would soon get literary work and succeed. He boldly stated his intentions to Mr. Allan, who did not raise any objections at first. Poe's attempt, however, to take leave of Mrs. Allan with tears in his eyes changed matters. She showed the most violent opposition to the project, and would not give her consent. Poe had been away from the Allan home a few nights, and was stopping with a companion, presumed to have been Ebenezer Berling. Upon Mrs. Allan's entreaties his guardian attempted to stop Poe from going away. Judge Hughes had the statement of the vessel owner in which Poe originally intended to sail, but who, upon the demands of Mr. Allan, later on refused to take him. Poe and his companion, who had been drinking, suc-

ceeded, however, in getting away shortly afterwards on another vessel. When they sobered up his companion relented, deserted at the first place the vessel reached, and returned to Richmond. Poe continued, and finally reached an English port, went to London, to France, and back again to London, in quick succession. His efforts for literary work being unsuccessful, his thoughts turned quickly to his native land. Without means he again obtained a place on a vessel bound for some port about Boston, where he arrived in the summer of 1827. In Boston he looked for his parents' friends, and finally fell in with C. F. S. Thomas, the printer who undertook to print his first volume of poems, 'Tamerlane.' The relatives of both Thomas and Poe were said to have been associated in some way years before this, and something about this old connection was not pleasant to Thomas. This was very likely his reason for keeping his knowledge of Poe a secret up to his death in 1876."

Whatever may have been the facts with regard to the immediate circumstances surrounding the departure, and there is no reason to doubt the truth of Berling's participation in the expedition, yet with regard to the voyage to Europe the following observations may be made: 1. The identity of the story with that by Hirst is plain, and its sole authority the same, no other being possible, — namely, Poe's word. 2. The time, from some date in January to May 26 when Poe enlisted, is insufficient for the events, even assuming that Poe was not engaged in preparing "Tamerlane" for the press before May 26. 3. Poe's relatives in Baltimore did not believe the tale: ("She [Miss Herring] does not believe in the St. Petersburgh story, and is sure he was only once abroad." Miss Poe to the author). 4. There is no corroborating evidence, nor has any been alleged except the so-called Inman portrait of Poe published in the *Anglo-Saxon Review*, 1900, and reproduced in the *New York Tribune*, April 29, 1900, and said to have been painted in the poet's nineteenth year, according to the label on the frame.

The portrait bears no resemblance to Poe, and Inman did not arrive in London till after Poe's enlistment. Whatever Poe was doing, he certainly was not having his portrait painted.

With regard to the remark of Mr. Whitty as to some association between the relatives of Thomas and Poe's parents, of an unpleasant sort, nothing is elsewhere said. Mrs. Martha Thomas Booth wrote to me, June 14, 1884: "My father, Calvin F. S. Thomas, was born in the city of New York, Aug. 5, 1808. His father, who was an Englishman and I think the only member of his family in this country, died when father was a very young child. Grandma removed with her two children, father and an older sister to Norfolk, Va., to reside with relatives, returning after a few years to Boston, her native place, to educate her children." Mrs. Thomas, with her children, was, perhaps, at Norfolk as early as 1811, the last year the Poes were there; and living with relatives on her own side of the family, not Thomases. The Miss Thomas who shared with Mrs. Poe her last benefit at Norfolk, was not likely to have been the older sister of Calvin. The statement, therefore, seems to me purely hypothetical.

Page 60. Poe and John Neal. Poe is said to have written to John Neal at the suggestion of George Poe, Neilson Poe's father; but it is more likely that this advice was given by William Gwynn, to whom he submitted "Al Aaraaf" in 1829. William Gwynn was editor of the *Federal Gazette and Baltimore Daily Advertiser* from 1812 to its ending in 1837, with the exception of the year 1835. He was an associate and club member with John Neal during the latter's residence in Baltimore, 1815–1823, and he is frequently mentioned in Neal's "Wandering Recollections of a Somewhat Busy Life," Boston, 1869. Poe dedicated "Tamerlane," in the edition of 1829, to Neal, and on sending him a copy wrote as follows (*Portland Daily Advertiser*, 1850): —

I thank you, sir, for the kind interest you express for my worldly as well as poetical welfare — a sermon of prosing would have met with much less attention.

You will see that I have made the alterations you suggest, "ventured out" in place of *peer-ed*, which is, at best, inapplicable to a statue — and other corrections of the same kind — there is much however (in metre) to be corrected — for I did not observe it till too late.

I wait consciously for your notice of the book — I think the best lines for *sound* are these in Al Aaraaf.

> There Nature speaks and even ideal things
> Flap shadowy sounds from visionary wings.

But the best thing (in every other respect) is the small piece headed "Preface."

I am certain that these lines have never been surpassed.

> Of late eternal condor years
> So shake the very air on high,
> With tumult as they thunder by
> I hardly have had time for cares
> Through gazing on the unquiet sky.

"It is well to think well of one's self" — so says somebody. You will do me justice, however.

Most truly yours,

EDGAR A. POE.

BALTIMORE, Dec. 29, 1829.

Page 73. POE AT WEST POINT. The account given by Poe's classmates (i, 69) is sustained by the reminiscences of another of them in advanced age, Timothy Pickering Jones, appointed to the Academy from Tennessee in 1830. They are given in an interview, dated Seguin, Texas, May 8, and published in the New York *Sun*, May 10, 1903, as follows: —

"Poe and I were classmates, roommates, and tentmates. From the first time we met he took a fancy to me, and owing to his older years and extraordinary literary merits, I thought he was the greatest fellow on earth. From much that he told me of

his previous life, he was dissipated before he ever entered for the West Point cadetship. He was certainly given to extreme dissipation within a very short time after he entered school. At first he studied hard and his ambition seemed to be to lead the class in all studies. He was an extraordinary scholar in all branches except mathematics, for which he seemed to have an aversion. In that branch he fell short and that seemed to have a tendency to discourage him, and it was only a few weeks after the beginning of his career at West Point that he seemed to lose interest in his studies and to be disheartened and discouraged. I think when he discovered he could not lead his classes that it had a tendency to dampen his ordinarily genial disposition.

"However, he would at times become a victim to the blues, and for many days he would hardly speak to any one, and his disposition seemed suddenly to be changed from life, energy, congeniality, and pleasure to abruptness, revenge, spitefulness, and even viciousness. He was invariably pleasant to me when in these despondent moods and would generally get me to go with him down to 'Old Benny's,' a place some distance from the buildings that the Government has since purchased and made a part of the reserve, but which at that time was a rendezvous for the boys when they could escape the guards. Old Benny — I forget his other name — had intoxicants, and Poe would risk any chances in evading the officers when in one of his moods to go down, and he would invariably drink until he became raving drunk. It was not more than four weeks after we entered West Point that Poe, accompanied by me, made his first venture to this joint. This was the first time I had ever seen him under the influence of liquor, and he was soon more like a demon than a man. He was fearless at all times, and when under the influence of liquor was desperate, and the boys at West Point always had a high regard for him both through a respect for his extraordinary talents and through fear.

"Poe would form a dislike to a man and his hatred was deep

and unreconcilable. There was one of the teachers there, Prof. Locke, who hated Poe, and the spirit of uncongeniality was mutual. It was Locke whom Poe on one occasion attempted to throw down a sixty-foot embankment in the dead hours of the night into the Hudson River. This was when he was returning from Old Benny's late one night, thoroughly intoxicated and imbued with the idea that Locke had done him some injustice. It was one of the most trying efforts of my life to prevent Poe from doing this terrible deed. Poe would drink to a most thorough state of intoxication every time he could get where there was anything to drink. It was quite frequent that long after taps were sounded at night Poe would awaken me and ask me to go down to Old Benny's with him. Due to my younger years and the influence of an older head, I would invariably accompany him.

"Many a time I have seen Poe in the guardhouse as a raving maniac from the result of drink after these escapades. He, when under the influence of drink, knew no such thing as obedience to his superiors and could only be handled by force, but I have never seen him subdued until after the effects of drink had worn off. He finally became so intolerable from his excessive drink that he was dismissed for disobedience to his superiors. I left West Point shortly after his dismissal, but never from that time saw him.

"Poe had evidenced considerable literary genius before he left West Point, and probably before he came there. He would often write some of the most forcible and vicious doggerel, have me copy it with my left hand in order that it might be disguised, and post it around the building. Locke was ordinarily one of the victims of his stinging pen. He would often play the roughest jokes on those he disliked. I have never seen a man whose hatred was so intense as that of Poe. I believe that I am the only living West Point associate of Poe."

An interview from the same source appeared in *The Sun*,

May 29, 1904, copied from the Richmond *Times-Despatch*, but it appears much colored by the channel through which it passed and betrays a precision of dates and an exact knowledge of Poe's biographies that seem incompatible with the age of Colonel Jones. In this version the following is added: —

"On the morning of the 6th of March, when Poe was ready to leave West Point, we were in our room together, and he told me I was one of the few true friends he had ever known, and as we talked the tears rolled down his cheeks. I say candidly that I thought a great deal of the talented young man. I had grown to love him, and I know that he would have risked his life for me. He told me much of his past life, one part of which he said he had confided to no other living soul. This was that while it was generally believed that he had gone to Greece in 1827 to offer his services to assist in putting down the Turkish oppressors, he had done no such thing, that about as near Europe as he ever got was Fort Independence, Boston Harbor, where he enlisted, and was assigned to Battery H, First Artillery, which was afterward transferred to Fortress Monroe, Va. Poe told me that for nearly two years he let his kindred and friends believe that he was fighting with the Greeks, but all the while he was wearing the uniform of Uncle Sam's soldiers, and leading a sober and moral life."

The weight to be given to this evidence seems to me slight, owing to its errors of fact regarding Poe's dismissal, the advanced age of Colonel Jones, and the signs of remaking in the *Times-Despatch* version. It, however, contains genuine elements.

The statement by Hirst is as follows: —

"Mr. Allan's house now became doubly displeasing to him; deprived of her who had, in all cases, endeavored to make it a happy home. Mr. Allan's manners, however, had become somewhat softened, and he professed, if he did not feel, an

entire reconciliation. Mr. Poe now resolved to enter the West Point Academy, and, as his application was backed by Chief Justice Marshall, Andrew Stevenson, Gen. Scott, and many other gentlemen of the highest distinction, to say nothing of Mr. Allan, he found no difficulty in obtaining a letter of appointment. At West Point his stay was brief. At first he was delighted with everything, busied himself in study, and 'headed' every class; but after the lapse of some ten months, he heard of Mr. Allan's marriage with Miss Patterson, of Richmond, a lady young enough to be his grand-daughter. She was a relative of Gen. Scott's, and lived at Belleville, the residence of Mrs. Mayo, the General's mother-in-law. Upon the birth of the first child Mr. Poe made up his mind that the heirship was at an end, and as he considered the army no place for a poor man, he determined to resign. At West Point it is necessary, in order to achieve such a step, to obtain permission from the parent or guardian. For this permission he wrote to Mr. Allan, who flatly refused it; this refusal Mr. Poe represented to Col. Thayer, the Superintendent of the post, who declined interfering with the rules, or to accept the resignation. It was about this period that Poland made the desperate and unfortunate struggle for independence, against the combined powers of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, which terminated in the capitulation of Warsaw, and the annihilation of the kingdom. — All our cadet's former chivalric ardor had now returned, and with tenfold vigor. He burned to be a participant in the affray. But to do this, it was doubly necessary to leave West Point. There was one resource yet left him: he positively refused to do duty of any kind, disobeyed all orders, and, keeping closely to his quarters, amused himself with his old tricks — caricaturing and Pasquinading the Professors. There was a gentleman named Joseph Locke, who had made himself especially obnoxious, through his pertinacity in *reporting* the pranks of the cadets. At West Point a 'report' is no every-day matter, but

a very serious thing. Each 'report' counts a certain number against the offender — is charged to his account — and when the whole exceeds a stated sum, he is liable to dismissal. Mr. Poe, it appears, wrote a long lampoon against this Mr. Locke, of which the following are the only stanzas preserved: —

> "'As for Locke, he is all in my eye,
> May the d——l right soon for his soul call.
> He never was known to lie —
> In bed at a reveillé roll-call.
>
> "'John Locke was a notable name;
> Joe Locke is a greater: in short
> The former was well known to fame,
> But the latter 's well known "to report."'

The result of all this was just what he intended. For some time Col. Thayer, to whose good offices the young cadet had been personally recommended by General Scott, overlooked these misdemeanors. But at length, the matter becoming too serious, charges were instituted against him for 'Neglect of duty and disobedience of orders'; (nothing was said about the lampoons) and he was tried by a Court Martial. There were specifications innumerable, to all which, by way of saving time, he pleaded 'guilty,' although some of them were monstrously absurd. In a word, he was cashiered *nem. con.* and went on his way rejoicing.

"But not to Poland. The capitulation had been effected, and that unfortunate country was no more. He repaired to Baltimore, where, shortly afterwards, he learned the death of Mr. Allan, who had left him nothing. His widow even refused him possession of his private library — a valuable one. To be sure he had never treated the lady with a whit more respect than that to which he thought her, as a woman, entitled." (*Saturday Museum*, *loc. cit.*)

Page 87. Poe's Relatives. John Poe, the Scotch-Irish emigrant, married Jane McBride, said to have been the daughter (or sister) of Admiral McBride, and settled in Pennsylvania, with two sons, David and William, and had a son George, and

seven other children. David married Elizabeth Carnes, of Lancaster, Pa., and removed to Cecil County, Maryland, and later to Baltimore. Of seven children by this marriage, three only — David, Maria, and Eliza — had issue. David, the eldest son, married Mrs. Hopkins (born Arnold) and had William Henry Leonard, Edgar Allan, and Rosalie MacKenzie. Maria married William Clemm, a widower (July 12, 1817), and had children, Henry (Sept. 10, 1818), Virginia Maria (Aug. 22, 1820), Virginia Eliza (Aug. 15, 1822), who married Edgar Allan Poe. Eliza married Henry Herring, and had by him five children.

William Poe, brother of David, senior, removed to Georgia, and died at Augusta, Sept. 25, 1804. He left two sons, William and Robert.

George Poe, brother of David, senior, and William, senior, had three children, Jacob, George, and a daughter. Jacob, of Frederick County, Maryland, had issue, Neilson, George, and Amelia. George, brother of Jacob, removed to Mobile, Alabama. The unnamed daughter married William Clemm aforesaid and had by him five children, one of whom married Neilson Poe. The two wives of William Clemm were first cousins; both Edgar and Neilson Poe married first cousins, and they were second cousins to each other.

Of these relatives Poe had direct relations with his grandmother, who died in 1834 ("about a year ago" — Poe to William Poe, August 20, 1835, "The Virginia Poe," xvii, 13; but the words quoted, marked there illegible, are given in a copy of the letter, *The Book-Lover*, no date) at the age of seventy-nine, being nursed by Mrs. Clemm, and it is noticeable that this was at the time of Poe's distress and relief by Kennedy; he lived with Mrs. Clemm, in 1831, at Mechanics Row, Milk Street, now known as Eastern Avenue, and in 1833 at 3 Amity Street, between Saratoga and Lexington Streets; and he associated with Neilson Poe and his first cousins, the

Herrings, whose mother, his aunt Eliza, had died about 1824. He also corresponded with William and Robert Poe, of Augusta, his father's first cousins, and with George Poe of Mobile, also his father's first cousin and brother-in-law of Mr. Clemm by his first marriage; his letters to them were invariably an appeal for money, first upon Mrs. Clemm's account and latterly upon his own.

Page 90. *The Green Mountain Gem* (*circa* 1850), in an article, "Annabel Lee," announces the death at the age of nine months and two weeks, on February 24, of "Annabel Lee, only daughter of Mary J. and T. C. Leland," and states that the child was born shortly before Poe's death. The writer says: "This Annabel Lee Leland was the daughter of parents who had always the warmest affection for the late gifted and unfortunate Edgar A. Poe. Their house had been a refuge for him when all others were shut against him, and in the bitterest hours of trial and suffering he had found in them warm and steady friends. Often had they taken him in a state of inebriation from the streets in winter, when he must have perished from the cold, and provided him shelter, comfort, and sympathy. So in their company was spent some of the most calm and cheerful hours of the latter part of his life. The attachment between them was the result of a sincere affection he had cherished for the Mary Leland, mentioned in the announcement, in her youth. He had known her when she was but twelve years old." The writer represents the two as schoolmates, and Poe as thinking her dead soon after their separation; this, he says, was the legend of "Annabel Lee" of the poem. He found her married: "she cherished a sympathy for the miserable child of genius; her husband befriended, and afterwards loved him for his talents, his warm heart, and the dazzling attractions of his conversation." This is an interesting example of a "Poe legend," and illustrates the contemporary conception of Poe at the time of his death.

Page 94. It seems likely that Wilmer knew Poe at an earlier date. He was born in Baltimore, and had not wandered further than Elkton, Md., when he joined Atkinson, publisher of the *Saturday Evening Post* and *The Casket* in Philadelphia. Poe's sonnet, "To Science," appeared in *The Casket*, Oct. 1830, and it is natural to suppose that this was through Wilmer, especially as the Wilmer MS. of the poems of Poe, representing a state anterior to the 1829 edition, was handed down in his family. Wilmer, moreover, speaks of his acquaintance with Poe as beginning "soon after his return from St. Petersburgh." Their meeting in 1833 was, probably, the renewal of earlier companionship in 1829 before the issue of Poe's poems of that date.

Page 114. The "unnamed editor" is identified by Mr. J. H. Whitty as Mr. Sparhawk, from Maine, author of "Hours of Childhood, and other Poems," 1820.

Page 131. The best collection of books open to Poe was the Baltimore Athenæum Library, of which he may have made as good use as Hawthorne was then doing of the Salem Athenæum Library. On inquiry, I was told that the old records were destroyed. Kennedy's collection was, no doubt, open to him after 1834, but there is no indication that he used it.

Page 141. The date of the arrival of Poe with Mrs. Clemm and Virginia in Richmond was Oct. 1, 1836 (Mrs. Clemm to William Poe, "The Virginia Poe," xvii, 379).

Page 163. Poe also applied to William Poe and received a contribution for Mrs. Clemm, which he acknowledged in the following letter (*New York Times*, Feb. 15, 1908): —

RICHMOND, VA., April 12, 1836.

MY DEAR SIR, — A press of business has hitherto prevented my replying to your kind letter of the 29th March, enclosing $50 to Mrs. Clemm. Your prompt and generous assistance, so frequently manifested, is, I assure you, deeply felt and appre-

ciated by myself as well as by her. I trust that she is now so circumstanced, or that she soon will be so, as to render it unnecessary to tax the kindness of yourself and brothers any further.

On the day before receiving your letter I wrote to Washington Poe, Macon, in reply to a favor of his offering his own assistance. He has become a subscriber to the *Messenger*.

I hope you have received our March number. That for April will follow, I hope, soon.

It is probable that at some future time I may avail myself of your friendly invitation and pay you a visit in Augusta. In the mean time, should business or inclination lead you, or any of our friends, to Virginia, it would afford me the greatest pleasure to show you every attention in my power.

With my best respects to Mrs. Poe and your brother, I remain, dear William,

Yours most sincerely,

EDGAR A. POE.

DEAR COUSIN, — Edgar, a few days since, handed me a note for $50, for which, I learn, I am indebted to your kindness. Accept my sincere gratitude. Will you have the goodness to present to your lady my respects, and believe me,

Yours sincerely,

MARIA CLEMM.

Page 178. "Maelzel's Chess-Player" is said to have appeared previously in a Baltimore newspaper.

Page 186. It has been denied that any invitation was sent by Dr. Hawks. Hirst, however (*loc. cit.*), quotes from the letter: "I wish you to fall in with your *broad-axe* amidst this miserable literary trash which surrounds us. I believe you have the will, and I know well you have the ability."

Page 208. A sketch of James Heath is given in "The Southern Literary Messenger, 1834–1864," by B. B. Minor, 1905;

and a picturesque account of P. P. Cooke in Griswold's "Poets and Poetry of America," 1855, which may be supplemented by a charming letter from John Esten Cooke, his brother, to Griswold, in the latter's correspondence, edited by his son, 1900. The passages are a chapter of old Virginia life.

Page 217. Cf. with the paragraph beginning, "I could add," etc., the quotation as given by Hirst (*loc. cit.*) as follows: " 'In point of mere style it is, perhaps, even superior to "The House of Usher." It is simpler. In the latter composition he seems to have been distrustful of his effects, or, rather, too solicitous of bringing them forth fully to the eye, and thus, perhaps, has laid on too much coloring. He has erred, however, on the safe side, that of exuberance, and the evil might easily be remedied by relieving the style of some of its epithets [since done]. There would be no fear of injuring the graphic effect, *which is powerful.*' The italics are Mr. Irving's own." The passage in brackets is so printed in Hirst. The original is precisely as printed in the text.

Page 217. Dr. Snodgrass, it is also worth noticing, had been the last editor of the Baltimore *Saturday Visiter*, succeeding T. S. Arthur in that post.

Page 219. Neilson Poe was editor of the Baltimore *Commercial Chronicle and Daily Marylander* in 1839.

Page 232. POE AND HOFFMANN. Mr. Palmer Cobb, in his study of the influence of Hoffmann on Poe, examines thoroughly the literature of the subject, but I must own that I remain unconvinced that Poe had any acquaintance with Hoffmann in the original, or any effective knowledge of German at all. Briggs's testimony is direct, in 1845, — "He makes quotations from the German, but he can't read a word of the language"; and English says likewise, in 1846, — "his frequent quotations from languages of which he is entirely ignorant." The quotation from Novalis, used as a motto for "The Mystery of Marie Roget," occurs in "Fragments from German Prose Writers,"

translated by Sarah Austin, with biographical sketches of the authors, New York, 1841, together with other Novalis quotations used by him, and he reviewed the volume (*Graham's*, Dec. 1841). He derived his knowledge of Körner from Burton's papers on that poet in the *Gentleman's*, Aug.-Sept. 1838. He knew no more of Tieck than he might have derived from Carlyle, or of Schelling than was told in Coleridge, and Schlegel he had read in an early American translation, as already noted. The special discrimination between *Dichtkunst* and *dichten* is plainly from some footnote in a translation or similar source. In respect to Hoffmann, it is admitted that so much indebtedness as is found in "The House of Usher" and "Metzengerstein" is amply accounted for by Poe's acquaintance with Scott's article, *Foreign Quarterly*, July, 1827; and so much as is found in "William Wilson," similarly, by *Blackwood's* "Devil's Elixir," 1824. In brief, wherever the trail is hunted down, it ends in an English source, generally in magazine literature.

The other tales in which Hoffmann's influence is traced are, 1. "Introduction to the Folio Club," assigned to the *Serapions brüder*. 2. "The Assignation," assigned to *Doge und Dogaressa*. 3. "The Oval Portrait," assigned to *Die Jesuiterkirche in G——*. 4. "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains," assigned to *Der Magnetiseur*. Of these four, no English translation earlier than Poe's tale in each instance has been mentioned by writers on the subject. It is to be observed, however, that in the first two the obligation is of the slightest, if it exists at all in the case of the Folio Club, the idea of which is common to literature; and in the third and fourth, likewise, the idea, as also in the case of "William Wilson," is a universal theme, and obligation can exist only in similarity of handling. Such knowledge as Poe had of the tales in question, it is most reasonable to think, he derived from translations, or other notices, in magazines, and that he dealt with such sources in

these tales as he is known to have done with similar sources in other tales. His affinity with Hoffmann is mainly a coincidence in the use of universal themes and the handling of their natural incidents, which may have been suggested to Poe, in these instances, indirectly from Hoffmann; but in fundamental treatment he differs from Hoffmann by a world's breadth, as has been pointed out by W. C. Brownell (*Scribner's*, Jan. 1909), who says, — "He had vastly more affinity with Cagliostro than with Hoffmann, from whom — inexplicably — he is so often said to derive." Poe, so far from being mis-born in America, a German romanticist wandered from the fatherland, represented in his tales the climax in America of that inferior romanticism whose best and widely varying exponents were Mrs. Radcliffe, Godwin, Brockden Brown, Disraeli, and Bulwer.

Page 257. English (*The Independent*, Oct. 22, 1896) tells the same story as Rosenbach, and seems to me to be relying wholly on Rosenbach for the capital facts. He describes his acquaintance with Poe before this time and speaks of his manner as "easy and refined, and his tone and conversation winning." He then details a story of finding Poe intoxicated on the street and taking him home, and assigns it to 1841; the house is that described by Mayne Reid, as supported against an adjoining brick wall, evidently the earlier residence of Poe; and he affirms his knowledge by report, not observation, of other occasions on which Poe was taken home before the quarrel with Burton. The quarrel itself he describes from Graham's account, who was present, as including "foul and abusive" language on Poe's part, as Poe himself had represented it. "He [Graham] described it rather minutely, and, when he had done, I said to him: 'You have told me before how disgraceful were the causes which severed your connection with Poe, and how, with that and this, can you defend the man?' Graham's answer was: 'Oh, that's all right; but I hate Griswold.'" This evidence is, therefore, ten years after the fact. English says he

heard both Burton's and Poe's statements, whether directly or indirectly is not quite clear. On the whole, English's observation of Poe in Philadelphia seems to have been no more than occasional, and his reminiscences of him at that time to be mixed with second-hand knowledge.

Page 297. The source of the article in *Hearth and Home* is told by the author (Amanda B. Harris to W. M. Griswold, Jan. 22, 1896): "The incidents concerning Poe were told me in 1852. My informant was a lady who lived in Philadelphia when Poe had 'a little cottage on the outskirts'; she was in some way connected with an association intended to assist in a delicate manner those in reduced circumstances who had been accustomed to a life of refinement and perhaps luxury. She became personally acquainted with the little family, and befriended them. This lady is dead."

Page 330. An admirable notice of Charles J. Peterson from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 7, 1887, is reprinted in Smyth's "Philadelphia Magazines and their Contributors," 1892.

Page 343. The alleged sources of "The Pit and the Pendulum" are: 1. "The Man in the Bell," *Blackwood's*, Nov. 1821, reprinted in William Maginn's "Oderherty Papers," 1855. 2. "The Iron Shroud," *Blackwood's*, Aug. 1830, reprinted, just before Poe's tale, in *The Visitor and Lady's Parlor Magazine*, i, 2 (n. s.), Aug. 1840. 3. Cf. *Knickerbocker's*, Feb. 1850. This is an excellent example of the genesis of some of Poe's tales.

A curious and Poesque pendant to "The Mystery of Marie Roget" was the fact that the employer of Mary Rogers, Mr. Anderson, afterwards conceived himself to be in communication with her, "seeing her face to face in the flesh and taking advice from her in respect to business matters," and in a certain sense to be haunted by her visibly. This was during 1870-1880. The account came into court, Appleton *vs.* N. Y. Life

Insurance Company *in re* Mary Cecilia Rogers, Trial in Trial Term Supreme Court, New York County, before Mr. Justice Patterson, Dec. 8, 1901. The evidence was that he said she told him the names of the murderers as a "spiritual secret."

Page 354. The review was apparently the same that appeared over Poe's name in the *Boston Miscellany*, Oct. 1842; but it contained no unfavorable comment.

END OF VOLUME I

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